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6. The Bell at Edmonton 188
7. Weston from the Ouse 223
8. Eartham 299

2622

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS volume contains the Pieces originally published as the second volume of Cowper's Poems, the remainder of his posthumous Poems, and the Translation of Andreini's Adamo, the joint work of Cowper and Hayley at Eartham, when Johnny of Norfolk "acted as Secretary, and committed the composition to paper, as it proceeded from the lips of the two social translators."

The second Volume had no other preface than the brief advertisement prefixed to the Task. It was thus entitled,

THE TASK.

BY

WILLIAM COWPER,

OF THE INNER TEMPLE, ESQ.

Fit surculus arbor. ANON.

LONDON:—PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON AND CO.
NO. 72, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.
1784.

"The motto of the whole," says Cowper to Mr. Unwin, "is *Fit surculus arbor*. If you can put the author's name under it, do so: if not, it must go without one, for I know not to whom to ascribe it. It was a motto taken by a certain Prince of Orange in the year 1733, but not to a poem of his

own writing, or indeed to any poem at all, but, as I think, to a medal."—Letter, Oct. 2, 1784.

If the motto was not composed for the medal (which is most probable), it may perhaps have been taken from an emblem. The emblem itself occurs among those engraved by Crispinus Passæus, for which George Wither wrote a volume of verses: it is the forty-sixth of the first book; but the motto there is *Tandem fit arbor.*

The Index to the Task (for which, as well as for the parallel passages, the Editor repeats his thanks to Mr. Peace) will be found so useful that any edition of that delightful poem must henceforth without such an appendage be deemed deficient.

The version of Andreini's Adamo was made from one of the Milan editions, (1613. 1617.) There are great alterations in the later one of Perugia, (1640;) but if the translators had been aware of this when they commenced this work, they would still, says Hayley, have preferred the earlier copy, as best answering their "main purpose of enabling the reader to judge how far it is probable that the imagination of Milton might have caught fire from the ideas of Andreini, since the translation exhibits those ideas just as they appeared in that copy of the Adamo which Milton must have read, if he read any, during his travels in Italy. For the edition of Perugia was not printed till several years after the return of our great poet to his own country."

The translation was first published by Hayley in that edition of Milton's Poetical Works which contained his own life of the poet, with Cowper's translations of the Latin and Italian poems, and Cowper's annotations; and which he entitled Cowper's Milton. It was printed at Chichester, in four volumes crown octavo, 1810.

CONTENTS.

THE TASK.

	Page
Advertisement	1
Book I.	2
Book II.	27
Book III.	51
Book IV.	75
Book V.	99
Book VI.	126
Index to the Task	156
Epistle to Joseph Hill	161
Tirocinium	163
John Gilpin	188
The Distressed Travellers; or, Labour in vain	195
A Tale founded on a Fact, which happened in Jan. 1779	197
To the Rev. Mr. Newton, on his Return from Ramsgate	199
Love abused	199
A Poetical Epistle to Lady Austen	200
From a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Newton	203
The Colubriad	204
On Friendship	205
An Epistle to a Protestant Lady in France	210
The Yearly Distress; or, Tithing Time at Stock in Essex	212
Sonnet to Henry Cowper, Esq.	214
Lines addressed to Dr. Darwin, author of the "Botanic Garden"	214
On Mrs. Montagu's Feather Hangings	215
On the Death of Mrs. Throckmorton's Bullfinch	217
The Rose	219
Ode to Apollo	219
The Poet's New-Year's Gift	220
Pairing Time Anticipated	221
The Dog and the Water-Lily	223
To the Immortal Memory of the Halibut	224
Gratitude. Addressed to Lady Hesketh	225
Lines, composed for a Memorial of Ashley Cowper, Esq.	227
Song on Peace. Written at the request of Lady Austen	227
Song. Also written at the request of Lady Austen	228

Page
Epitaph on Johnson 229
To Miss C——, on her Birthday 229
The Flatting-Mill 229
Epitaph on a Hare 230
Epitaphium alterum 232
On the Loss of the Royal George 232
In Submersionem Navigii, cui Georgius Regale Nomen, inditum . 233
The Negro's Complaint 234
Pity for poor Africans 236
The Morning Dream 237
Sweet Meat has sour Sauce; or, the Slave-trader in the Dumps 239
The Valediction 240
On the Queen's Visit to London 243
Annus Memorabilis. 1789. Written in Commemoration of his Majesty's happy Recovery 245
The Cockfighter's Garland 247
On the Benefit received by his Majesty from Sea-bathing in the Year 1789 249
To Mrs. Throckmorton, on her beautiful Transcript of Horace's Ode Ad Librum suum. 250
Inscription for a Stone erected at the Sowing of a Grove of Oaks at Chillington, the Seat of T. Giffard, Esq. 1790 250
Another, for a Stone erected on a similar Occasion at the same Place in the following Year. Anno 1791 251
Hymn for the Use of the Sunday School at Olney 251
Stanzas on the late indecent Liberties taken with the Remains of the great Milton,—Anno 1790 252
To Mrs. King, on her kind Present to the Author, a Patchwork Counterpane of her own making 253
In Memory of the late John Thornton, Esq 254
To Warren Hastings, Esq. By an old Schoolfellow of his at Westminster 256
The Four Ages. A brief Fragment of an extensive projected Poem . 256
The Judgement of the Poets 257
The Moralizer corrected. A Tale 258
The Faithful Bird 260
The Needless Alarm. A Tale 261
Inscription for the tomb of Mr. Hamilton 264
Epitaph on Mrs. M. Higgins, of Weston 265
The Retired Cat 265
Yardley Oak 268
To the Nightingale, which the Author heard sing on New Year's Day, 1792 272
Lines written for Insertion in a Collection of Handwritings and Signatures made by Miss Patty, Sister of Hannah More 273
Epitaph on a free but tame Redbreast, a Favourite of Miss Sally Hurdis 273
Sonnet to William Wilberforce, Esq 274
Epigram, printed in the Northampton Mercury 275
To Dr. Austin, of Cecil Street, London 275

CONTENTS.

Page
Sonnet addressed to William Hayley, Esq 275
Mary and John 276
To Sir Joshua Reynolds 276
On the Author of Letters on Literature 277
To the Rev. William Bull 278
Catharina. To Miss Stapleton, now Mrs. Courtenay . . . 280
Catharina: the Second Part. On her Marriage to George Courtenay, Esq 281
On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture out of Norfolk, the Gift of my Cousin, Anne Bodham 282
The Poplar Field 285
On a mischievous Bull, which the Owner of him sold at the Author's instance 286
An Epitaph 287
Epitaph on Fop, a Dog belonging to Lady Throckmorton . . . 288
Sonnet to George Romney, Esq 288
On receiving Hayley's Picture 289
Epitaph on Mr. Chester, of Chicheley 289
On a plant of Virgin's-Bower, designed to cover a Garden-seat . 289
To my Cousin, Anne Bodham, on receiving from her a network Purse, made by herself 290
Inscription for an Hermitage in the Author's Garden . . . 290
To Mrs. Unwin 291
To John Johnson, on his presenting me with an antique Bust of Homer 291
To a Young Friend, on his arriving at Cambridge wet, when no Rain had fallen there 292
A Tale 292
To William Hayley, Esq 295
On a Spaniel, called Beau, killing a young Bird 295
Beau's Reply 296
Answer to Stanzas addressed to Lady Hesketh, by Miss Catharine Fanshawe 297
To the Spanish Admiral Count Gravina, on his translating the Author's Song on a Rose into Italian Verse 297
On Flaxman's Penelope 297
On receiving Heyne's Virgil from Mr. Hayley 298
To Mary 298
On the Ice Islands, seen floating in the German Ocean . . . 299
Montes Glaciales, in Oceano Germanico natantes 301
The Salad. By Virgil 303
The Cast-away 307
Monumental Inscription to William Northcot 309
Translation 309
A Riddle 309
Answer. From the Gentleman's Magazine 309
In Seditionem horrendam, corruptelis Gallicis, ut fertur, Londini nuper exortam 310
Translation 310
"Cowper had sinn'd with some excuse" 310

Page

Stanzas subjoined to the yearly Bill of Mortality of the Parish of All-Saints, Northampton, Anno Domini 1787 311
On a similar Occasion, for the Year 1788 312
On a similar Occasion, for the Year 1789 313
On a similar Occasion, for the Year 1790 315
On a similar Occasion, for the Year 1792 316
On a similar Occasion, for the Year 1793 317

Adam: a Sacred Drama. Translated from the Italian of Gio. Battista Andreini 319

THE

POEMS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

THE TASK.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE history of the following production is briefly this. A lady, fond of blank verse, demanded a poem of that kind from the author, and gave him the Sofa for a subject. He obeyed; and having much leisure, connected another subject with it; and pursuing the train of thought to which his situation and turn of mind led him, brought forth at length, instead of the trifle which he at first intended, a serious affair,—a Volume.

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BOOK I.

ARGUMENT.

Historical deduction of seats, from the stool to the Sofa. A schoolboy's ramble. A walk in the country. The scene described. Rural sounds as well as sights delightful. Another walk. Mistake concerning the charms of solitude corrected. Colonnades commended. Alcove, and the view from it. The Wilderness. The Grove. The Thresher. The necessity and the benefits of exercise. The works of nature superior to and in some instances inimitable by art. The wearisomeness of what is commonly called a life of pleasure. Change of scene sometimes expedient. A common described, and the character of crazy Kate introduced upon it. Gipsies. The blessings of civilized life. That state most favourable to virtue. The South Sea-islanders compassionated, but chiefly Omai. His present state of mind supposed. Civilized life friendly to virtue, but not great cities. Great cities, and London in particular, allowed their due praise, but censured. *Fête champêtre.* The book concludes with a reflection on the fatal effects of dissipation and effeminacy upon our public measures.

THE SOFA.

I SING the Sofa. I who lately[1] sang
Truth, Hope, and Charity, and touch'd with awe
The solemn chords, and with a trembling hand,
Escaped[2] with pain from that adventurous flight,
Now seek repose upon an humbler theme; 5
The theme though humble, yet august and proud
The occasion,—for the Fair commands the song.

[1] I who erewhile the happy garden sung
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing, &c.
Paradise Regained, i. 1.

I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song.
Paradise Lost, i. 13.

[2] Thee I revisit now with bolder wing,
Escaped the Stygian pool. *Par. Lost*, iii. 13.

Time was when clothing, sumptuous or for use,
Save[3] their own painted skins, our sires had none.
As yet[4] black breeches were not, satin smooth, 10
Or velvet soft, or plush with shaggy pile.
The hardy chief upon the rugged rock
Wash'd by the sea, or on the gravelly bank
Thrown up by wintry torrents roaring loud,
Fearless of wrong, reposed his weary strength. 15
Those barbarous ages past, succeeded next
The birthday of invention, weak at first,
Dull in design, and clumsy to perform.
Joint-stools were then created; on three legs
Upborne they stood,—three legs upholding firm 20
A massy slab, in fashion square or round.
On such a stool immortal Alfred sat,
And sway'd the sceptre of his infant realms;
And such in ancient halls and mansions drear
May still be seen, but perforated sore 25
And drill'd in holes the solid oak is found,
By worms voracious eating through and through.
At length a generation more refined
Improved the simple plan, made three legs four,
Gave them a twisted form vermicular, 30
And o'er the seat with plenteous wadding stuff'd
Induced a splendid cover green and blue,
Yellow and red, of tapestry richly wrought
And woven close, or needle-work sublime.
There might ye see the piony spread wide, 35
The full-blown rose, the shepherd and his lass,
Lap-dog and lambkin with black staring eyes,
And parrots with twin cherries in their beak.
Now came the cane from India, smooth and bright
With Nature's varnish; sever'd into stripes 40

[3] A painted vest Prince Vortiger had on,
Which from a naked Pict his grandsire won.
Howard's British Princes.

Yet in another of his poems Cowper says—

Taught thee to clothe thy pink'd and painted hide.
Expostulation.

[4] As yet this world was not. *Par. Lost*, v. 577.

That interlaced each other, these supplied
Of texture firm a lattice-work, that braced
The new machine, and it became a chair.
But restless was the chair; the back erect
Distress'd the weary loins that felt no ease; 45
The slippery seat betray'd the sliding part
That press'd it, and the feet hung dangling down,
Anxious in vain to find the distant floor.
These for the rich: the rest, whom fate had placed
In modest mediocrity, content 50
With base materials, sat on well-tann'd hides
Obdurate and unyielding, glassy smooth,
With here and there a tuft of crimson yarn,
Or scarlet crewel in the cushion fixt:
If cushion[5] might be call'd, what harder seem'd 55
Than the firm oak of which the frame was form'd.
No want of timber then was felt or fear'd
In Albion's happy isle. The lumber stood
Ponderous[6], and fixt by its own massy weight.
But elbows still were wanting; these, some say, 60
An Alderman of Cripplegate contrived,
And some ascribe the invention to a priest
Burly and big and studious of his ease.
But rude at first, and not with easy slope
Receding wide, they press'd against the ribs, 65
And bruised the side, and elevated high
Taught the raised shoulders to invade the ears.
Long time elapsed or ere our rugged sires
Complain'd, though incommodiously pent in,
And ill at ease behind. The ladies first 70
'Gan[7] murmur, as became the softer sex.
Ingenious fancy, never better pleased
Than when employ'd to accommodate the fair,

[5] The other shape,
If shape it might be call'd, that shape had none.
Par. Lost, iii. 666.

[6] The arch'd and ponderous roof; by its own weight
Made steadfast and immoveable.
Congreve. Mourning Bride.

[7] Either tropic now
'Gan thunder. *Par. Reg.* iv. 410.

Heard the sweet moan with pity, and devised
The soft settee; one elbow at each end, 75
And in the midst an elbow, it received
United yet divided, twain at once.
So sit two Kings of Brentford on one throne;
And so two citizens who take the air
Close pack'd and smiling in a chaise and one. 80
But relaxation of the languid frame
By soft recumbency of outstretch'd limbs,
Was bliss reserved for happier days;—so slow
The growth of what is excellent, so hard
To attain perfection in this nether world. 85
Thus first necessity invented stools,
Convenience next suggested elbow chairs,
And luxury the accomplished SOFA last.
The nurse sleeps sweetly, hired to watch the sick
Whom snoring she disturbs. As sweetly he 90
Who quits the coach-box at the midnight hour
To sleep within the carriage more secure,
His legs depending at the open door.
Sweet sleep enjoys the Curate in his desk,
The tedious Rector drawling o'er his head, 95
And sweet the Clerk below: but neither sleep
Of lazy nurse, who snores the sick man dead,
Nor his who quits the box at midnight hour
To slumber in the carriage more secure,
Nor sleep enjoy'd by Curate in his desk, 100
Nor yet the dozings of the Clerk are sweet,
Compared with the repose the SOFA yields[8].

[8] Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet
With charm of earliest birds, &c.
But neither breath of morn when she ascends
With charm of earliest birds, &c.
Par. Lost, iv. 641—656.

Milton has another of these replicatory passages at the end of Book x.:—

What better can we do than to the place
Repairing where he judged us, prostrate fall, &c.
They forthwith to the place
Repairing where he judged them, prostrate fell, &c.

Another in Comus, line 222:—

Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?

Oh may I live exempted (while I live
Guiltless of pamper'd appetite obscene,)
From pangs arthritic that infest the toe 105
Of libertine excess. The SOFA suits
The gouty limb, 'tis true; but gouty limb,
Though on a SOFA, may I never feel:
For I have loved the rural walk through lanes
Of grassy swarth close cropt by nibbling[9] sheep, 110
And skirted thick with intertexture firm
Of thorny boughs; have loved the rural walk
O'er hills, through valleys, and by river's brink,
E'er since a truant boy I pass'd my bounds
To enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames. 115
And still remember, nor without regret
Of hours that sorrow since has much endear'd,
How oft, my slice of pocket store consumed,
Still hungering pennyless and far from home,
I fed on scarlet hips and stony haws, 120
Or blushing crabs, or berries that emboss
The bramble, black as jet, or sloes austere.
Hard fare! but such as boyish appetite
Disdains not, nor the palate undepraved
By culinary arts unsavoury deems. 125
No SOFA then awaited my return,
Nor SOFA then I needed. Youth repairs
His wasted spirits quickly, by long toil
Incurring short fatigue; and though our years,
As life declines, speed rapidly away, 130
And[10] not a year but pilfers as he goes

I did not err, there does a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night.
Orlando. If ever you have look'd on better days;
If ever been where bells have knoll'd to church.
Duke. True is it that we have seen better days;
And have with holy bell been knoll'd to church, &c.
As You Like It, Act ii. Sc. 7.

[9] Where the nibbling flocks do stray. *L'Allegro.*

[10] Years following years steal something every day.
Pope. Imit. of Hor. Ep. ii. 2.
(Singula de nobis anni prædantur euntes.)
Not numerous are our joys when life is new,
And yearly some are falling of the few.
Young. Sat. v.

Some youthful grace that age would gladly keep,
A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees
Their length and colour from the locks they spare;
The elastic spring of an unwearied foot 135
That mounts the stile with ease, or leaps the fence,
That play of lungs inhaling and again
Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes
Swift pace or steep ascent no toil to me,
Mine have not pilfer'd yet; nor yet impair'd 140
My relish of fair prospect: scenes that soothed
Or charm'd me young, no longer young, I find
Still soothing and of power to charm me still.
And witness, dear companion of my walks,
Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive 145
Fast lock'd in mine, with pleasure such as love
Confirm'd by long experience of thy worth
And well-tried virtues could alone inspire,—
Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.
Thou knowest my praise of nature most sincere, 150
And that my raptures are not conjured up
To serve occasions of poetic pomp,
But genuine, and art partner of them all.
How oft upon yon eminence our pace
Has slacken'd to a pause, and we have borne 155
The ruffling wind scarce conscious that it blew,
While admiration feeding at the eye,
And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene.
Thence with what pleasure have we just discern'd
The distant plough slow-moving, and beside 160
His labouring team, that swerved not from the track,
The sturdy swain diminish'd to a boy[11]!
Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain
Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled o'er,
Conducts the eye along his sinuous[12] course 165
Delighted. There, fast rooted in his bank

[11] You tall anchoring bark
Diminished to her cock, her cock a buoy
Almost too small for sight.
King Lear, Act iv. Sc. 6.

[12] Striking the ground with sinuous trace.
Par. Lost, vii. 481.

Stand, never overlook'd, our favourite elms
That screen the herdsman's solitary hut;
While far beyond and overthwart the stream
That as with molten glass inlays the vale, 170
The sloping land recedes into the clouds;
Displaying on its varied side the grace
Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tower,
Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells
Just undulates upon the listening ear; 175
Groves, heaths, and smoking villages remote.
Scenes must be beautiful which daily view'd
Please daily[13], and whose novelty survives
Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years.
Praise justly due to those that I describe. 180
Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds
Exhilarate the spirit[14], and restore
The tone of languid Nature. Mighty winds
That sweep the skirt of some far-spreading wood
Of ancient growth, make music not unlike 185
The dash of ocean on his winding shore,
And lull the spirit while they fill the mind,
Unnumber'd branches waving in the blast,
And all their leaves fast fluttering, all at once.
Nor less composure waits upon the roar 190
Of distant floods, or on the softer voice
Of neighbouring fountain, or of rills that slip
Through the cleft rock, and chiming as they fall
Upon loose pebbles, lose themselves at length
In matted grass, that with a livelier green 195
Betrays the secret of their silent course[15].
Nature inanimate employs sweet sounds,
But animated Nature sweeter still
To soothe and satisfy the human ear.

[13] *Hæc placuit semel, et decies repetita placebit.* Hor.

[14] Sustain, Thou only canst, the sick of heart,
Restore their languid spirits, and recall
Their lost affections unto thee and thine.
Excursion, p. 142.

[15] By their onward lapse
Betray to sight the motion of the stream
Else imperceptible. *Excursion*, p. 139.

Ten thousand warblers cheer the day[16], and one 200
The livelong night: nor these alone whose notes
Nice-finger'd art must emulate in vain,
But cawing rooks, and kites that swim sublime
In still repeated circles, screaming loud,
The jay, the pie, and even the boding owl 205
That hails the rising moon, have charms for me.
Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh,
Yet heard in scenes where peace for ever reigns
And only there, please highly for their sake.
Peace to the artist, whose ingenious thought 210
Devised the weather-house, that useful toy!
Fearless of humid air and gathering rains
Forth steps the man, an emblem of myself;
More delicate his timorous mate retires.
When Winter soaks the fields, and female feet 215
Too weak to struggle with tenacious clay,
Or ford the rivulets, are best at home,
The task of new discoveries falls on me.
At such a season and with such a charge
Once went I forth, and found, till then unknown, 220
A cottage, whither oft we since repair:
'Tis perch'd upon the green-hill top, but close
Environ'd with a ring of branching elms
That overhang the thatch, itself unseen,
Peeps at the vale below; so thick beset 225
With foliage of such dark redundant growth,
I call'd the low-roof'd lodge the *peasant's nest*.
And hidden as it is, and far remote
From such unpleasing sounds as haunt the ear
In village or in town, the bay of curs 230
Incessant, clinking hammers, grinding wheels,
And infants clamorous whether pleased or pain'd,
Oft have I wish'd the peaceful covert mine.
Here, I have said, at least I should possess
The poet's treasure[17], silence, and indulge 235

16 To their nests
Were slunk all but the wakeful nightingale. *Par. Lost*, iv. 601.

17 Run,
To ease and silence every Muse's son. *Pope. Hor.* ii. 2.
Silence is the rest of the soul, and refreshes invention. *Lord Bacon.*

The dreams of fancy, tranquil and secure.
Vain thought! the dweller in that still retreat
Dearly obtains the refuge it affords.
Its elevated site forbids the wretch
To drink sweet waters of the crystal well; 240
He dips his bowl into the weedy ditch,
And heavy-laden brings his beverage home,
Far-fetch'd and little worth; nor seldom waits,
Dependent on the baker's punctual call,
To hear his creaking panniers at the door, 245
Angry and sad, and his last crust consumed.
So farewell envy of the *peasant's nest*.
If solitude make scant the means of life,
Society for me! Thou seeming sweet,
Be still a pleasing object in my view, 250
My visit still, but never mine abode.
Not distant far, a length of colonnade
Invites us: Monument of ancient taste,
Now scorn'd, but worthy of a better fate.
Our fathers knew the value of a screen 255
From sultry suns, and in their shaded walks
And long-protracted bowers, enjoy'd at noon[18]
The gloom and coolness of declining day.
We bear our shades about us; self-deprived
Of other screen, the thin umbrella spread, 260
And range an Indian waste without a tree.
Thanks to Benevolus[19]; he spares me yet
These chestnuts ranged in corresponding lines,
And though himself so polish'd, still reprieves
The obsolete prolixity of shade. 265
Descending now (but cautious, lest too fast,)
A sudden steep, upon a rustic bridge
We pass a gulf in which the willows[20] dip
Their pendent boughs, stooping as if to drink.

[18] Where summer's beauty midst of winter stays,
And winter's coolness spite of summer's rays.
Pope. Imit. of Cowley.

[19] John Courtney Throckmorton, Esq. of Weston Underwood.

[20] ——— A willow grows ascant the brook.
There on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
Clambering to hang. *Hamlet*, Act iv. Sc. 7.

Hence ancle-deep in moss and flowery thyme 270
We mount again, and feel at every step
Our foot half sunk in hillocks green and soft,
Raised by the mole, the miner of the soil.
He not unlike the great ones of mankind,
Disfigures earth, and plotting in the dark 275
Toils much to earn a monumental pile,
That may record the mischiefs he has done.
The summit gain'd, behold the proud alcove
That crowns it! yet not all its pride secures
The grand retreat from injuries impress'd 280
By rural carvers, who with knives deface
The panels, leaving an obscure rude name[21]
In characters uncouth, and spelt amiss.
So strong the zeal to immortalize himself
Beats in the breast of man, that even a few 285
Few transient years won from the abyss abhorr'd
Of blank oblivion[22], seem a glorious prize,
And even to a clown. Now roves the eye,
And posted on this speculative height
Exults in its command. The sheep-fold here 290
Pours out its fleecy tenants o'er the glebe,
At first, progressive as a stream, they seek
The middle field; but scatter'd by degrees
Each to his choice, soon whiten all the land. 294
There, from the sun-burnt hay-field homeward creeps
The loaded wain, while lighten'd of its charge
The wain that meets it passes swiftly by,
The boorish driver leaning o'er his team
Vociferous, and impatient of delay.
Nor less attractive is the woodland scene, 300
Diversified with trees of every growth
Alike yet various. Here the grey smooth trunks
Of ash, or lime, or beech, distinctly shine,
Within the twilight of their distant shades
There lost behind a rising ground, the wood 305
Seems sunk, and shorten'd to its topmost boughs.
No tree in all the grove but has its charms,

[21] Their name, their years, spelt by the unletter'd Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply. *Gray*

[22] For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey—

Though each its hue peculiar; paler some,
And of a wannish grey; the willow such
And poplar[23], that with silver lines his leaf, 310
And ash far-stretching his umbrageous arm;
Of deeper green the elm; and deeper still,
Lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak.
Some glossy-leaved and shining in the sun,
The maple, and the beech of oily nuts 315
Prolific, and the lime at dewy eve[24]
Diffusing odours: nor unnoted pass
The sycamore, capricious in attire,
Now green, now tawny, and ere autumn yet
Have changed the woods, in scarlet honours bright. 320
O'er these, but far beyond, (a spacious map
Of hill and valley interposed between,)
The Ouse, dividing the well-water'd land,
Now glitters in the sun, and now retires,
As bashful, yet impatient to be seen. 325
Hence the declivity is sharp and short,
And such the re-ascent; between them weeps
A little Naiad her impoverish'd urn
All summer long, which winter fills again.
The folded gates would bar my progress now, 330
But that the Lord[25] of this enclosed demesne,
Communicative of the good he owns,
Admits me to a share: the guiltless eye
Commits no wrong, nor wastes what it enjoys.
Refreshing change! where now the blazing sun? 335
By short transition we have lost his glare,
And stepp'd at once into a cooler clime.
Ye fallen avenues! once more I mourn
Your fate unmerited, once more rejoice
That yet a remnant of your race survives. 340
How airy and how light the graceful arch,

[23] From haunted spring, and dale
Edged with poplar pale.
Milton. Hymn 184.

[24] From morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve.
Par. Lost, i. 742.

[25] See the foregoing note (19).

Yet aweful as the consecrated roof[26]
Reechoing pious anthems! while beneath
The chequer'd earth seems restless as a flood
Brush'd by the wind. So sportive is the light 345
Shot through the boughs, it dances as they dance,
Shadow and sunshine intermingling quick,
And darkening and enlightening, as the leaves
Play wanton, every moment, every spot. 349
And now with nerves new-braced and spirits cheer'd
We tread the wilderness, whose well-roll'd walks
With curvature of slow and easy sweep,—
Deception innocent,—give ample space
To narrow bounds. The grove receives us next;
Between the upright shafts of whose tall elms 355
We may discern the thresher at his task.
Thump after thump, resounds the constant flail,
That seems to swing uncertain, and yet falls
Full on the destined ear. Wide flies the chaff,
The rustling straw sends up a frequent mist 360
Of atoms sparkling in the noon-day beam.
Come hither, ye that press your beds of down
And sleep not,—see him sweating o'er his bread
Before he eats it.—'Tis the primal[27] curse,

[26] Accordant with the theory commonly ascribed to Bishop Warburton, but which may be found in older Stukeley—

"The cloysters in this Cathedral (at Gloucester) are beautiful beyond any thing I ever saw, ... for a gallery, library, or the like, it is the best manner of building, because the idea of it is taken from a walk of trees, whose branching heads are curiously imitated by the roof."—*Itinerarium Curiosum*, p. 68.

Why should we crave a hallowed spot?
An altar is in each man's cot,
A church in every grove that spreads
Its living roof above our heads.
Wordsworth. Labourer's Hymns.

Here aged trees Cathedral walks compose.
Pope. Imit. of Cowley.

This line may have given the hint to Warburton.

[27] O, my offence is rank, it smells to Heaven,
It hath the primal eldest curse upon it.
Hamlet, Act iii. Sc. 3.

On me the curse aslope
Glanced on the ground, with labour I must earn
My bread—What harm? idleness had been worse.
Par. Lost, x. 1053.

But soften'd into mercy; made the pledge 365
Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan.
By ceaseless action, all that is subsists.
Constant rotation of the unwearied wheel
That nature rides upon, maintains her health,
Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads 370
An instant's pause, and lives but while she moves.
Its own revolvency upholds the world.
Winds from all quarters agitate the air,
And fit the limpid element for use,
Else noxious: oceans, rivers, lakes, and streams 375
All feel the freshening impulse, and are cleansed
By restless undulation. Even the oak
Thrives by the rude concussion of the storm;
He seems indeed indignant, and to feel
The impression of the blast with proud disdain, 380
Frowning as if in his unconscious arm
He held the thunder. But the monarch owes
His firm stability to what he scorns,
More fix't below, the more disturb'd above.
The law by which all creatures else are bound, 385
Binds man the lord of all. Himself derives
No mean advantage from a kindred cause,
From strenuous toil his hours of sweetest ease.
The sedentary stretch their lazy length
When custom bids, but no refreshment find, 390
For none they need: the languid eye, the cheek
Deserted of its bloom, the flaccid, shrunk,
And wither'd muscle, and the vapid soul,
Reproach their owner with that love of rest
To which he forfeits even the rest he loves[28]. 395

It polishes anew
By that collision all the fine machine:
Else rust would rise, and foulness by degrees
Incumbering, choke at last what heaven design'd
For ceaseless motion and a round of toil.
Akenside. Pleasures of Imagination, ii. 161.

28 She marked thee there
Stretch'd on the rack of a too easy chair,
And heard thy everlasting yawn confess
The pains and penalties of idleness.
Dunciad, iv. 341.

Not such the alert and active. Measure life
By its true worth, the comforts it affords,
And theirs alone seems worthy of the name.
Good health, and its associate in the most,
Good temper ; spirits prompt to undertake, 400
And not soon spent, though in an arduous task ;
The powers of fancy and strong thought are theirs ;
Even age itself seems privileged in them
With clear exemption from its own defects.
A sparkling eye beneath a wrinkled front 405
The veteran shows, and gracing a grey beard
With youthful smiles, descends towards the grave
Sprightly, and old almost without decay.
Like a coy maiden, ease, when courted most,
Farthest retires,—an idol, at whose shrine 410
Who oftenest sacrifice are favour'd least.
The love of Nature, and the scenes she draws
Is Nature's dictate. Strange! there should be found
Who self-imprison'd in their proud saloons,
Renounce the odours of the open field 415
For the unscented fictions of the loom ;
Who satisfied with only pencil'd scenes,
Prefer to the performance of a God
The inferior wonders of an artist's hand.
Lovely indeed the mimic works of art, 420
But Nature's works far lovelier. I admire—
None more admires the painter's magic skill,
Who shows me that which I shall never see[29],
Conveys a distant country into mine,

With anxious care they labour to be glad
What bodily fatigue is half so bad ?
Young. Sat. v.

[29] Who *shows* me that which I shall *never see.*
A liberty of expression justified by high authority—
So hand in hand they pass'd, the loveliest pair
That ever since in love's embraces met,
Adam the goodliest man of men since born
His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve.
Par. Lost, iv. 321.
In the lowest deep a lower deep. *Ibid.* iv. 76.
Et ambigua de Vespasiano fama : solusque omnium ante se Principum, in melius mutatus est.—Tacitus Hist. i. 50.

And throws Italian light on English walls. 425
But imitative strokes can do no more
Than please the eye, sweet Nature every sense[30].
The air salubrious of her lofty hills,
The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales
And music of her woods,—no works of man 430
May rival these; these all bespeak a power
Peculiar, and exclusively her own.
Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast;
'Tis free to all,—'tis every day renew'd,
Who scorns it, starves deservedly at home. 435
He does not scorn it, who imprison'd long[31]
In some unwholesome dungeon, and a prey
To sallow sickness, which the vapours dank
And clammy of his dark abode have bred,
Escapes at last to liberty and light. 440
His cheek recovers soon its healthful hue,
His eye relumines its extinguish'd fires,
He walks, he leaps, he runs,—is wing'd with joy,
And riots in the sweets of every breeze.
He does not scorn it, who has long endured 445
A fever's agonies, and fed on drugs.
Nor yet the mariner[32], his blood inflamed

[30] For eloquence the soul, song charms the sense.
Par. Lost, ii. 556.

[31] Fair the face of spring,
To every eye; but how much more to his
Round whom the bed of sickness long diffused
Its melancholy gloom! how doubly fair
When first with fresh-born vigour he inhales
The balmy breeze, and feels the blessed sun
Warm at his bosom, from the springs of life
Chasing oppressive damps and languid pain.
Akenside. Pleasures of Imagination, ii. 88.

[32] So by a calenture misled
The mariner with rapture sees
On the smooth ocean's azure bed
Enamel'd fields and verdant trees;
With eager haste he longs to rove
In that fantastic scene, and thinks
It must be some enchanted grove,—
And in he leaps and down he sinks.
Swift. South Sea. 1721.

With acrid salts ; his very heart athirst
To gaze at Nature in her green array.
Upon the ship's tall side he stands, possess'd 450
With visions prompted by intense desire ;
Fair fields appear below, such as he left
Far distant, such as he would die to find,—
He seeks them headlong, and is seen no more.
The spleen is seldom felt where Flora reigns ; 455
The lowering eye, the petulance, the frown,
And sullen sadness that o'ershade, distort,
And mar the face of beauty, when no cause
For such immeasurable woe appears,
These Flora banishes, and gives the fair 460
Sweet smiles and bloom less transient than her own.
It is the constant revolution stale
And tasteless, of the same repeated joys[33],
That palls and satiates, and makes languid life
A pedler's pack, that bows the bearer down. 465
Health suffers, and the spirits ebb ; the heart
Recoils from its own choice,—at the full feast
Is famish'd,—finds no music in the song,
No smartness in the jest, and wonders why.
Yet thousands still desire to journey on, 470
Though halt and weary of the path they tread.
The paralytic who can hold her cards
But cannot play them, borrows a friend's hand
To deal and shuffle, to divide and sort
Her mingled suits and sequences, and sits 475
Spectatress both and spectacle, a sad
And silent cypher, while her proxy plays.
Others are dragg'd into the crowded room
Between supporters ; and once seated, sit
Through downright inability to rise, 480
Till the stout bearers lift the corpse again[34].
These speak a loud memento. Yet even these

[33] Like cats in air pumps, to subsist we strive
On joys too thin to keep the soul alive.
Young, Satire v.

[34] ——— the gay assembly's gayest room
Is but an upper story to some tomb.
Young, Satire vi.

Themselves love life, and cling to it, as he
That overhangs a torrent to a twig.
They love it, and yet loathe it; fear to die, 485
Yet scorn the purposes for which they live.
Then wherefore not renounce them? No—the dread,
The slavish dread of solitude that breeds
Reflection and remorse, the fear of shame,
And their inveterate habits, all forbid. 490
Whom call we gay? That honour has been long
The boast of mere pretenders to the name.
The innocent are gay[35];—the lark is gay
That dries his feathers saturate with dew
Beneath the rosy cloud, while yet the beams 495
Of day-spring overshoot his humble nest.
The peasant too, a witness of his song,
Himself a songster, is as gay as he.
But save me from the gaiety of those
Whose head-aches nail them to a noonday bed; 500
And save me too from theirs whose haggard eyes
Flash desperation, and betray their pangs
For property stripp'd off by cruel chance;
From gaiety that fills the bones with pain,
The mouth with blasphemy, the heart with woe. 505
The earth was made so various, that the mind
Of desultory man, studious of change,
And pleased with novelty, might be indulged.
Prospects however lovely may be seen
Till half their beauties fade; the weary sight, 510
Too well acquainted with their smiles, slides off
Fastidious, seeking less familiar scenes.
Then snug inclosures in the shelter'd vale,
Where frequent hedges intercept the eye,
Delight us, happy to renounce a while[36], 515
Not senseless of its charms, what still we love,

[35] And farewell merry heart,
The gift of guiltlesse minds.
Spenser. Epitaph on Sir P. Sidney.

[36] But if much converse
Thee satiate, to short absence I could yield,
For solitude sometimes is best society,
And short retirement urges sweet return.
Par. Lost, ix. 247.

That such short absence may endear it more.
Then forests, or the savage rock may please,
That hides the sea-mew in his hollow clefts
Above the reach of man: his hoary head 520
Conspicuous many a league, the mariner
Bound homeward, and in hope already there,
Greets with three cheers exulting. At his waist
A girdle of half-wither'd shrubs he shows,
And at his feet the baffled billows die. 525
The common overgrown with fern[37], and rough
With prickly goss, that shapeless and deform
And dangerous to the touch, has yet its bloom
And decks itself with ornaments of gold,
Yields no unpleasing ramble; there the turf 530
Smells fresh, and rich in odoriferous herbs
And fungous fruits of earth, regales the sense
With luxury of unexpected sweets.

There often wanders one, whom better days
Saw better clad, in cloak of satin trimm'd 535
With lace, and hat with splendid riband bound.
A serving-maid was she, and fell in love
With one who left her, went to sea and died.
Her fancy follow'd him through foaming waves
To distant shores, and she would sit and weep 540
At what a sailor suffers; fancy too,
Delusive most where warmest wishes are,
Would oft anticipate his glad return,
And dream of transports she was not to know.
She heard the doleful tidings of his death, 545
And never smiled again. And now she roams
The dreary waste; there spends the livelong day,
And there, unless when charity forbids,
The livelong night. A tatter'd apron hides,
Worn as a cloak, and hardly hides a gown 550
More tatter'd still; and both but ill conceal
A bosom heaved with never-ceasing sighs.
She begs an idle pin of all she meets,
And hoards them in her sleeve; but needful food,

[37] E'en the wild heath displays her purple dies,
And midst the desert fruitful fields arise.
Pope. Windsor Forest.

Though press'd with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,
Though pinch'd with cold, asks never[38].—Kateis craz'd.
I see a column of slow-rising smoke
O'ertop the lofty wood that skirts the wild.
A vagabond and useless tribe there eat
Their miserable meal. A kettle slung 560
Between two poles upon a stick transverse,
Receives the morsel; flesh obscene of dog,
Or vermin, or at best, of cock purloin'd
From his accustom'd perch. Hard-faring race!
They pick their fuel out of every hedge, 565
Which kindled with dry leaves, just saves unquench'd
The spark of life. The sportive wind blows wide
Their fluttering rags, and shows a tawny skin,
The vellum of the pedigree they claim.
Great skill have they in palmistry, and more 570
To conjure clean away the gold they touch,
Conveying worthless dross into its place.
Loud when they beg, dumb only when they steal.
Strange! that a creature rational, and cast
In human mould, should brutalize by choice 575
His nature, and though capable of arts
By which the world might profit and himself,
Self-banish'd from society, prefer
Such squalid sloth to honourable toil.
Yet even these, though feigning sickness oft 580
They swathe the forehead, drag the limping limb
And vex their flesh with artificial sores,
Can change their whine into a mirthful note
When safe occasion offers, and with dance
And music of the bladder and the bag 585
Beguile their woes and make the woods resound.

[38] Man may dismiss compassion from his heart,
But God will never. Book vi. 442.
An assembly such as earth
Saw never. Book vi. 816.
This agreeable cadence is Miltonic.
Which my mind
Knew never, till this irksome night.
Par. Lost, v. 35.
Clamour such as heard in heaven till now
Was never. *Par. Lost*, vi. 209.

Such health and gaiety of heart enjoy
The houseless rovers of the sylvan world;
And breathing wholesome air[39], and wandering much,
Need other physic none to heal the effects 590
Of loathsome diet, penury, and cold.
Blest he, though undistinguish'd from the crowd
By wealth or dignity, who dwells secure
Where man, by nature fierce, has laid aside
His fierceness, having learnt, though slow to learn, 595
The manners and the arts of civil life.
His wants, indeed, are many: but supply
Is obvious; placed within the easy reach
Of temperate wishes and industrious hands.
Here virtue thrives as in her proper soil; 600
Not rude and surly, and beset with thorns,
And terrible to sight, as when she springs,
(If e'er she spring spontaneous,) in remote
And barbarous climes, where violence prevails,
And strength is lord of all; but gentle, kind, 605
By culture tamed, by liberty refresh'd,
And all her fruits by radiant truth matured.
War and the chase engross the savage whole:
War follow'd for revenge, or to supplant
The envied tenants of some happier spot, 610
The chase for sustenance, precarious trust!
His hard condition with severe constraint
Binds all his faculties, forbids all growth
Of wisdom, proves a school in which he learns
Sly circumvention, unrelenting hate, 615
Mean self-attachment, and scarce aught beside.
Thus fare the shivering natives of the north,
And thus the rangers of the western world
Where it advances far into the deep,
Towards the Antarctic. Even the favour'd isles 620
So lately found, although the constant sun[40]

[39] The physic of the field. *Essay on Criticism*, iii. 174.

[40] Could nature's bounty satisfy the breast,
The sons of Italy were surely blest.——
But small the bliss that sense alone bestows,
And sensual bliss is all the nation knows.
Goldsmith. Traveller.

Cheer all their seasons with a grateful smile,
Can boast but little virtue ; and inert
Through plenty, lose in morals what they gain
In manners, victims of luxurious ease. 625
These therefore I can pity, placed remote
From all that science traces, art invents,
Or inspiration teaches ; and inclosed
In boundless oceans never to be pass'd
By navigators uninform'd as they, 630
Or plough'd perhaps by British bark again.
But far beyond the rest, and with most cause,
Thee, gentle savage[41] ! whom no love of thee
Or thine, but curiosity perhaps,
Or else vain-glory, prompted us to draw 635
Forth from thy native bowers, to show thee here
With what superior skill we can abuse
The gifts of Providence, and squander life.
The dream is past. And thou hast found again
Thy cocoas and bananas, palms and yams, 640
And homestall thatch'd with leaves. But hast thou found
Their former charms ? And having seen our state,
Our palaces, our ladies, and our pomp
Of equipage, our gardens, and our sports,
And heard our music ; are thy simple friends, 645
Thy simple fare, and all thy plain delights
As dear to thee as once ? And have thy joys
Lost nothing by comparison with ours ?
Rude as thou art (for we return'd thee rude
And ignorant except of outward show,) 650
I cannot think thee yet so dull of heart
And spiritless, as never to regret
Sweets tasted here, and left as soon as known.
Methinks I see thee straying on the beach,
And asking of the surge that bathes thy foot 655
If ever it has washed our distant shore.
I see thee weep, and thine are honest tears,
A patriot's for his country. Thou art sad
At thought of her forlorn and abject state,
From which no power of thine can raise her up. 660
Thus fancy paints thee, and though apt to err,

[41] Omai.

Perhaps errs little, when she paints thee thus.
She tells me too, that duly every morn
Thou climb'st the mountain top, with eager eye
Exploring far and wide the watery waste 665
For sight of ship from England. Every speck
Seen in the dim horizon, turns thee pale
With conflict of contending hopes and fears.
But comes at last the dull and dusky eve,
And sends thee to thy cabin well-prepared 670
To dream all night of what the day denied.
Alas! expect it not. We found no bait
To tempt us in thy country. Doing good,
Disinterested good, is not our trade.
We travel far 'tis true, but not for nought; 675
And must be bribed to compass earth again
By other hopes and richer fruits than yours.
But though true worth and virtue in the mild
And genial soil of cultivated life
Thrive most, and may perhaps thrive only there, 680
Yet not in cities oft[42],—in proud and gay
And gain-devoted cities; thither flow,
As to a common and most noisome sewer,
The dregs and fæculence of every land.
In cities foul example on most minds 685
Begets its likeness. Rank abundance breeds
In gross and pamper'd cities sloth and lust,
And wantonness and gluttonous excess.
In cities, vice is hidden with most ease,
Or seen with least reproach; and virtue taught 690
By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there
Beyond the achievement of successful flight.
I do confess them nurseries of the arts,
In which they flourish most; where in the beams
Of warm encouragement, and in the eye 695
Of public note they reach their perfect size.
Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaim'd
The fairest capital of all the world,
By riot and incontinence the worst.
There touch'd by Reynolds, a dull blank becomes 700

[42] This is the life which those who fret in guilt,
And guilty cities, never know. *Thomson. Autumn*, 1352.

A lucid mirror, in which nature sees
All her reflected features. Bacon there
Gives more than female beauty to a stone,
And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.
Nor does the chisel occupy alone 705
The powers of sculpture, but the style as much;
Each province of her heart her equal care.
With nice incision of her guided steel
She ploughs a brazen field, and clothes a soil
So sterile with what charms soe'er she will, 710
The richest scenery and the loveliest forms.
Where finds philosophy her eagle eye
With which she gazes at yon burning disk
Undazzled, and detects and counts his spots?
In London. Where her implements exact 715
With which she calculates, computes and scans
All distance, motion, magnitude, and now
Measures an atom, and now girds a world?
In London. Where has commerce such a mart,
So rich, so throng'd, so drain'd, and so supplied 720
As London, opulent, enlarged and still
Increasing London? Babylon of old
Not more the glory of the earth, than she
A more accomplish'd world's chief glory now.
She has her praise. Now mark a spot or two 725
That so much beauty would do well to purge;
And show this Queen of Cities, that so fair
May yet be foul, so witty, yet not wise.
It is not seemly nor of good report
That she is slack in discipline,—more prompt 730
To avenge than to prevent the breach of law.
That she is rigid in denouncing death[43]
On petty robbers, and indulges life
And liberty, and oft-times honour too
To peculators of the public gold. 735

[43] One to destroy is murder by the law,
And gibbets keep the lifted hand in awe.
To murder thousands takes a specious name.
Young. Satire vii.

Where little villains must submit to fate,
That great ones may enjoy the world in state.
Dispensary. Canto ii.

That thieves at home must hang; but he that puts
Into his overgorged and bloated purse
The wealth of Indian provinces, escapes.
Nor is it well, nor can it come to good[44],
That through profane and infidel contempt[45] 740
Of holy writ, she has presumed to annul
And abrogate, as roundly as she may,
The total ordonance and will of God;
Advancing fashion to the post of truth,
And centering all authority in modes 745
And customs of her own, till sabbath rites
Have dwindled into unrespected forms,
And knees and hassocks are well-nigh divorced.
God made the country, and man made the town.
What wonder then[46], that health and virtue, gifts 750
That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
That life holds out to all, should most abound
And least be threatened in the fields and groves?
Possess ye therefore, ye who borne about
In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue[47] 755
But that of idleness, and taste no scenes
But such as art contrives,—possess ye still
Your element; there only ye can shine,
There only minds like yours can do no harm.
Our groves were planted to console at noon 760
The pensive wanderer in their shades. At eve
The moon-beam sliding softly in between
The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish,
Birds warbling all the music. We can spare
The splendour of your lamps, they but eclipse 765

[44] It is not, nor can it come to good. *Hamlet.*
[45] An infidel contempt of holy writ
Stole by degrees upon his mind. *Excursion*, p. 63.
[46] What wonder then, if fields and regions here
Breathe forth elixir pure. *Par. Lost*, iii. 606.
[47] Pleasures fled to, to redress
The sad fatigue of idleness. *Green. Spleen.*
There too, my Paridel, she marked thee there,
Stretch'd on the rack of a too easy chair,
And heard thy everlasting yawn confess
The pains and penalties of idleness.
Dunciad, iv. 341.

Our softer satellite. Your songs confound
Our more harmonious notes. The thrush departs
Scared, and the offended nightingale is mute.
There is a public mischief in your mirth,
It plagues your country. Folly such as yours 770
Graced with a sword, and worthier of a fan,
Has made, which enemies could ne'er have done,
Our arch of empire, steadfast but for you,
A mutilated structure, soon to fall.

THE TASK.

BOOK II.

ARGUMENT OF THE SECOND BOOK.

Which opens with reflections suggested by the conclusion of the former. Peace among the nations recommended on the ground of their common fellowship in sorrow. Prodigies enumerated. Sicilian earthquakes. Man rendered obnoxious to these calamities by sin. God the agent in them. The philosophy that stops at secondary causes, reproved. Our own late miscarriages accounted for. Satirical notice taken of our trips to Fontainbleau. But the pulpit, not satire, the proper engine of reformation. The Reverend Advertiser of engraved sermons. Petit maitre parson. The good preacher. Picture of a theatrical clerical coxcomb. Story-tellers and jesters in the pulpit reproved. Apostrophe to popular applause. Retailers of ancient philosophy expostulated with. Sum of the whole matter. Effects of sacerdotal mismanagement on the laity. Their folly and extravagance. The mischiefs of profusion. Profusion itself, with all its consequent evils, ascribed, as to its principal cause, to the want of discipline in the Universities.

THE TIME-PIECE.

Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness[1],
Some boundless contiguity of shade,
Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war
Might never reach me more! My ear is pain'd, 5
My soul is sick with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is fill'd.
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,
It does not feel for man. The natural bond
Of brotherhood is sever'd as the flax 10
That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
He finds his fellow guilty of a skin

[1] Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place, that I might leave my people and go from them.—*Jeremiah*, ix. 2.

Not colour'd like his own[2], and having power
To inforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause
Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey. 15
Lands intersected by a narrow frith
Abhor each other. Mountains interposed,
Make enemies of nations who had else
Like kindred drops been mingled into one.
Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys ; 20
And worse than all, and most to be deplored
As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,
Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat
With stripes, that mercy with a bleeding heart
Weeps when she sees inflicted on a beast. 25
Then what is man ? And what man seeing this,
And having human feelings, does not blush
And hang his head, to think himself a man ?
I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep, 30
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That sinews bought and sold have ever earn'd.
No : dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
Just estimation prized above all price,
I had much rather be myself the slave 35
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.
We have no slaves at home.—Then why abroad ?
And they themselves once ferried o'er the wave
That parts us, are emancipate and loosed.
Slaves cannot breathe in England ; if their lungs 40
Receive our air, that moment they are free,
They touch our country and their shackles fall.
That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,
And let it circulate through every vein 45
Of all your empire ! that where Britain's power
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.
Sure there is need of social intercourse,
Benevolence and peace and mutual aid
Between the nations, in a world that seems 50
To toll the death-bell of its own decease,

[2] Not remembering that he is (as old Fuller says) "the image of God cut in ebony."

And by the voice of all its elements
To preach the general doom[3]. When were the winds
Let slip[4] with such a warrant to destroy?
When did the waves so haughtily o'erleap 55
Their ancient barriers, deluging the dry?
Fire from beneath, and meteors[5] from above
Portentous, unexampled, unexplained,
Have kindled beacons in the skies; and the old
And crazy earth has had her shaking fits 60
More frequent, and foregone her usual rest.
Is it a time[6] to wrangle, when the props
And pillars of our planet seem to fail,
And Nature[7] with a dim and sickly eye
To wait the close of all? But grant her end 65
More distant, and that prophecy demands
A longer respite, unaccomplished yet;
Still they are frowning signals, and bespeak
Displeasure in his breast who smites the earth
Or heals it, makes it languish or rejoice. 70
And 'tis but seemly, that where all deserve
And stand exposed by common peccancy
To what no few have felt, there should be peace,
And brethren in calamity should love.
Alas for Sicily! rude fragments now[8] 75
Lie scatter'd where the shapely column stood.
Her palaces are dust. In all her streets

[3] Alluding to the late calamities at Jamaica. C.

[4] Cry havock, and let slip the dogs of war.
Julius Cæsar, act iii.

[5] August 18, 1783. C.

[6] Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, &c.
2 *Kings*, v. 26.

Are not you moved, when all the sway of earth
Shakes, like a thing unfirm? *Julius Cæsar*, act i.

[7] Alluding to the fog that covered both Europe and Asia during the whole summer of 1783. C.

[8] Where cattle pastured late, now scattered lies
With carcasses and arms, the ensanguined field
Deserted. *Par. Lost*, xi. 659.

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold.
Milton. Sonnet 18.

The voice of singing[9] and the sprightly chord
Are silent. Revelry and dance and show
Suffer a syncope and solemn pause, 80
While God performs upon the trembling stage
Of his own works, his dreadful part alone.
How does the earth receive him?—with what signs
Of gratulation and delight, her king?
Pours she not all her choicest fruits abroad, 85
Her sweetest flowers, her aromatic gums,
Disclosing paradise where'er he treads?
She quakes at his approach. Her hollow womb
Conceiving thunders, through a thousand deeps
And fiery caverns roars beneath his foot. 90
The hills move lightly[10] and the mountains smoke,
For He has touch'd them. From the extremest point
Of elevation down into the abyss,
His wrath is busy and his frown is felt.
The rocks fall headlong and the valleys rise; 95
The rivers die into offensive pools,
And charged with putrid verdure, breathe a gross
And mortal nuisance into all the air.
What solid was, by transformation strange
Grows fluid; and the fixt and rooted earth 100
Tormented into billows heaves and swells,
Or with vortiginous and hideous whirl
Sucks down its prey insatiable. Immense
The tumult and the overthrow, the pangs
And agonies of human and of brute 105
Multitudes, fugitive on every side,
And fugitive in vain. The sylvan scene
Migrates uplifted, and with all its soil
Alighting in far distant fields, finds out
A new possessor, and survives the change. 110
Ocean has caught the frenzy, and upwrought
To an enormous and o'erbearing height,
Not by a mighty wind, but by that voice

[9] All the merry hearted do sigh. The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth. The city of confusion is broken down. *Isaiah*, xxiv.

[10] I beheld the mountains, and they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.—*Jeremiah*, iv. 24.

Which winds and waves obey, invades the shore
Resistless. Never such a sudden flood, 115
Upridged so high, and sent on such a charge,
Possess'd an inland scene. Where now the throng
That press'd the beach, and hasty to depart
Look'd to the sea for safety? They are gone,
Gone with the refluent wave into the deep, 120
A prince with half his people. Ancient towers,
And roofs embattled high, the gloomy scenes
Where beauty oft and letter'd worth consume
Life in the unproductive shades of death,
Fall prone; the pale inhabitants come forth, 125
And happy in their unforeseen release
From all the rigours of restraint, enjoy
The terrors of the day that sets them free.
Who then that has thee, would not hold thee fast,
Freedom! whom they that lose thee, so regret, 130
That even a judgement making way for thee,
Seems in their eyes, a mercy, for thy sake.
Such evil sin hath wrought; and such a flame
Kindled in heaven, that it burns down to earth,
And in the furious inquest that it makes 135
On God's behalf, lays waste his fairest works.
The very elements, though each be meant
The minister of man, to serve his wants,
Conspire against him. With his breath, he draws
A plague into his blood, and cannot use 140
Life's necessary means, but he must die.
Storms rise to o'erwhelm him: or if stormy winds
Rise not, the waters of the deep shall rise,
And needing none assistance of the storm,
Shall roll themselves ashore, and reach him there. 145
The earth shall shake him out of all his holds,
Or make his house his grave: nor so content,
Shall counterfeit the motions of the flood,
And drown him in her dry and dusty gulfs.
What then,—were they the wicked above all, 150
And we the righteous, whose fast anchor'd isle
Moved not, while theirs was rock'd like a light skiff,
The sport of every wave? No: none are clear,
And none than we more guilty. But where all

Stand chargeable with guilt, and to the shafts 155
Of wrath obnoxious, God may chuse his mark,
May punish, if he please, the less, to warn
The more malignant. If he spared not them,
Tremble and be amazed at thine escape,
Far guiltier England! lest he spare not thee. 160
  Happy the man who sees a God employed
In all the good and ill that checquer life!
Resolving all events with their effects
And manifold results, into the will
And arbitration wise of the Supreme. 165
Did not his eye rule all things, and intend
The least of our concerns, (since from the least
The greatest oft originate,)—could chance
Find place in his dominion, or dispose
One lawless particle to thwart his plan, 170
Then God might be surprised, and unforeseen
Contingence might alarm him, and disturb
The smooth and equal course of his affairs.
This truth, philosophy, though eagle-eyed
In Nature's tendencies, oft overlooks, 175
And having found his instrument, forgets
Or disregards, or more presumptuous still,
Denies the power that wields it. God proclaims
His hot displeasure against foolish men
That live an atheist life: involves the heaven 180
In tempests, quits his grasp upon the winds
And gives them all their fury; bids a plague
Kindle a fiery boil upon the skin,
And putrify the breath of blooming health.
He calls for famine, and the meagre fiend 185
Blows mildew from between his shrivel'd lips,
And taints the golden ear. He springs his mines,
And desolates a nation at a blast.
Forth steps the spruce philosopher, and tells
Of homogeneal and discordant springs 190
And principles; of causes, how they work
By necessary laws their sure effects;
Of action and re-action. He has found
The source of the disease that nature feels,
And bids the world take heart and banish fear. 195

Thou fool! will thy discovery of the cause
Suspend the effect or heal it? Has not God
Still wrought by means since first he made the world,
And did he not of old employ his means
To drown it? What is his creation less 200
Than a capacious reservoir of means
Form'd for his use, and ready at his will?
Go[11] dress thine eyes with eye-salve, ask of him
Or ask of whomsoever he has taught,
And learn, though late, the genuine cause of all. 205
England, with all thy faults, I love thee still,
My country! and while yet a nook is left
Where English minds and manners may be found,
Shall be constrain'd to love thee. Though thy clime
Be fickle, and thy year, most part, deformed 210
With dripping rains, or wither'd by a frost,
I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies
And fields without a flower, for warmer France
With all her vines; nor for Ausonia's groves
Of golden fruitage and her myrtle bowers. 215
To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime
Of patriot eloquence to flash down fire
Upon thy foes, was never meant my task;
But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake
Thy joys and sorrows with as true a heart 220
As any thunderer there. And I can feel
Thy follies too, and with a just disdain
Frown at effeminates, whose very looks
Reflect dishonour on the land I love.
How, in the name of soldiership and sense, 225
Should England prosper, when such things, as smooth
And tender as a girl, all essenced o'er
With odours, and as profligate as sweet,
Who sell their laurel for a myrtle wreath,
And love when they should fight; when such as these
Presume to lay their hand upon the ark 231
Of her magnificent and aweful cause?
Time was when it was praise and boast enough

[11] Go, teach eternal wisdom how to rule,
Then drop into thyself and be a fool.
Pope. Essay on Man, ii. 29.

In every clime, and travel where we might,
That we were born her children; praise enough 235
To fill the ambition of a private man,
That Chatham's language was his mother tongue
And Wolfe's[12] great name compatriot with his own.
Farewell those honours, and farewell with them
The hope of such hereafter. They have fallen 240
Each in his field of glory: one in arms,
And one in council. Wolfe upon the lap
Of smiling victory that moment won,
And Chatham, heart-sick of his country's shame.
They made us many soldiers. Chatham still 245
Consulting England's happiness at home,
Secured it by an unforgiving frown
If any wrong'd her. Wolfe, where'er he fought,
Put so much of his heart into his act,
That his example had a magnet's force, 250
And all were swift to follow whom all loved.
Those suns are set. Oh rise some other such!
Or all that we have left is empty talk
Of old achievements, and despair of new.
Now hoist the sail, and let the streamers float 255
Upon the wanton breezes. Strew the deck
With lavender, and sprinkle liquid sweets,
That no rude savour maritime invade
The nose of nice nobility. Breathe soft
Ye clarionets, and softer still ye flutes, 260
That winds and waters lull'd by magic sounds
May bear us smoothly to the Gallic shore.
True, we have lost an empire,—let it pass.
True, we may thank the perfidy of France
That pick'd the jewel out of England's crown 265
With all the cunning of an envious shrew.
And let that pass,—'twas but a trick of state.
A brave man knows no malice, but at once
Forgets in peace the injuries of war,

[12] Cowper wrote from his own recollection here. In one of his letters he says. "Nothing could express my rapture when Wolfe made the conquest of Quebec."

And gives his direst foe a friend's embrace[13]. 270
And shamed as we have been, to the very beard
Braved and defied, and in our own sea proved
Too weak for those decisive blows, that once
Insured us mastery there, we yet retain
Some small pre-eminence ; we justly boast 275
At least superior jockeyship, and claim
The honours of the turf as all our own.
Go then, well worthy of the praise ye seek,
And show the shame ye might conceal at home,
In foreign eyes !—be grooms, and win the plate[14], 280
Where once your nobler fathers won a crown !—
'Tis generous to communicate your skill
To those that need it. Folly is soon learn'd[15] ;
And under such preceptors, who can fail ?
There is a pleasure[16] in poetic pains 285
Which only poets know. The shifts[17] and turns,
The expedients and inventions multiform
To which the mind resorts, in chase of terms
Though apt, yet coy, and difficult to win,—
To arrest the fleeting images that fill 290
The mirror of the mind, and hold them fast,
And force them sit, till he has pencil'd off
A faithful likeness of the forms he views ;
Then to dispose his copies with such art
That each may find its most propitious light, 295
And shine by situation, hardly less
Than by the labour and the skill it cost,

13 Who do for gold what Christians do for grace,
With open arms their enemies embrace.
Young. Satire vii.

14 Then peers grew proud in horsemanship to excel,
Newmarket's glory rose, as Britain's fell.
Pope. Imit. of Horace, ii. 1.

15 But difficulties soon abate
When birds are to be taught to prate,
And women are the teachers.
Tr. from Vincent Bourne.

16 There is a pleasure in being mad, which only madmen know.
Nat. Lee.

17 'Twere long to tell the expedients and the shifts
Which he that fights a season so severe
Devises. Book iii. 559.

Are occupations of the poet's mind
So pleasing, and that steal away the thought
With such address, from themes of sad import, 300
That lost in his own musings, happy man!
He feels the anxieties of life, denied
Their wonted entertainment, all retire.
Such joys has he that sings. But ah! not such,
Or seldom such, the hearers of his song. 305
Fastidious, or else listless, or perhaps
Aware of nothing arduous in the task
They never undertook, they little note
His dangers or escapes, and haply find
Their least amusement where he found the most[18]. 310
But is amusement all? studious of song,
And yet ambitious not to sing in vain,
I would not trifle merely, though the world
Be loudest in their praise who do no more.
Yet what can satire, whether grave or gay? 315
It may correct a foible, may chastise
The freaks of fashion, regulate the dress,
Retrench a sword-blade, or displace a patch;
But where are its sublimer trophies found?
What vice has it subdued? whose heart reclaim'd 320
By rigour, or whom laugh'd into reform?
Alas! Leviathan is not so tamed.
Laugh'd at, he laughs again; and stricken hard,
Turns to the stroke his adamantine scales,
That fear no discipline of human hands. 325
The pulpit therefore, (and I name it, fill'd
With solemn awe, that bids me well beware
With what intent I touch that holy thing;)
The pulpit, (when the satirist has at last,
Strutting and vapouring in an empty school, 330
Spent all his force, and made no proselyte;)
I say the pulpit (in the sober use
Of its legitimate peculiar powers,)
Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand,

[18] *Damnant quod non intelligunt.* Cic.
Serious should be an author's final views;
Who write for pure amusement, ne'er amuse
Young. Second Epis. to Pope.

The most important and effectual guard, 335
Support, and ornament of virtue's cause.
There stands the messenger of truth. There stands
The legate of the skies; his theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him, the violated law speaks out 340
Its thunders, and by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the gospel whispers peace.
He stablishes the strong, restores the weak,
Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,
And arm'd himself in panoply complete 345
Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms
Bright as his own, and trains by every rule
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,
The sacramental host of God's elect.
Are all such teachers? would to heaven all were! 350
But hark,—the Doctor's voice!—fast wedged between
Two empirics he stands, and with swoln cheeks
Inspires the news, his trumpet. Keener far
Than all invective is his bold harangue,
While through that public organ of report 355
He hails the clergy; and defying shame,
Announces to the world his own and theirs.
He teaches those to read, whom schools dismiss'd,
And colleges, untaught; sells accent, tone,
And emphasis in score, and gives to prayer 360
The *adagio* and *andante* it demands.
He grinds divinity of other days
Down into modern use; transforms old print
To zigzag manuscript, and cheats the eyes
Of gallery critics by a thousand arts.— 365
Are there who purchase of the Doctor's ware?
Oh name it not in Gath!—it cannot be,
That grave and learned Clerks should need such aid.
He doubtless is in sport, and does but droll,
Assuming thus a rank unknown before, 370
Grand caterer and dry nurse of the church.
I venerate the man, whose heart is warm,
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
That he is honest in the sacred cause. 375

To such I render more than mere respect,
Whose actions say that they respect themselves.
But loose in morals, and in manners vain,
In conversation frivolous, in dress
Extreme, at once rapacious and profuse, 380
Frequent in park, with lady at his side,
Ambling and prattling scandal as he goes,
But rare at home, and never at his books,
Or with his pen save when he scrawls a card;
Constant at routes, familiar with a round 385
Of ladyships, a stranger to the poor;
Ambitious of preferment for its gold,
And well prepared by ignorance and sloth,
By infidelity and love of the world
To make God's work a sinecure; a slave 390
To his own pleasures and his patron's pride;—
From such apostles, O ye mitred heads,
Preserve the church! and lay not careless hands
On sculls that cannot teach, and will not learn[19].
Would I describe a preacher such as Paul, 395
Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,
Paul should himself direct me. I would trace
His master-strokes, and draw from his design.
I would express him simple, grave, sincere;
In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain; 400
And plain in manner. Decent, solemn, chaste,
And natural in gesture. Much impress'd
Himself, as conscious of his aweful charge,
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too. Affectionate in look, 405
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty men.
Behold the picture!—Is it like?—Like whom?
The things that mount the rostrum with a skip,
And then skip down again; pronounce a text, 410
Cry, hem; and reading what they never wrote,—
Just fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,
And with a well-bred whisper close the scene.
In man or woman, but far most in man,

[19] We could not teach, and must despair to learn.
Book vi. 620.

And most of all in man that ministers 415
And serves the altar, in my soul I loath
All affectation. 'Tis my perfect scorn;
Object of my implacable disgust.
What!—will a man play tricks, will he indulge
A silly fond conceit of his fair form 420
And just proportion, fashionable mien
And pretty face, in presence of his God?
Or will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,
As with the diamond on his lily hand,
And play his brilliant parts before my eyes 425
When I am hungry for the bread of life?
He mocks his Maker, prostitutes and shames
His noble office, and instead of truth
Displaying his own beauty, starves his flock.
Therefore avaunt! all attitude and stare 430
And start theatric, practised at the glass.
I seek divine simplicity in him
Who handles things divine; and all beside,
Though learn'd with labour, and though much admired
By curious eyes and judgements ill-inform'd, 435
To me is odious as the nasal twang
Heard at conventicle[20], where worthy men
Misled by custom, strain celestial themes
Through the prest nostril, spectacle-bestrid.
Some, decent in demeanour while they preach, 440
That task perform'd, relapse into themselves,
And having spoken wisely, at the close
Grow wanton, and give proof to every eye,
Whoe'er was edified, themselves were not.
Forth comes the pocket mirror. First we stroke 445
An eyebrow; next, compose a straggling lock;
Then with an air, most gracefully perform'd,
Fall back into our seat; extend an arm

[20] In the first edition thus—

At *conventicle* heard, where worthy men.

He used to lay about and stickle,
Like ram or bull at conventicle.

Hudibras, I. ii. 438.

A conventicle flush'd his greener years.

Dispensary. Canto iv.

And lay it at its ease with gentle care,
With handkerchief in hand, depending low. 450
The better hand more busy, gives the nose
Its bergamot, or aids the indebted eye
With opera glass to watch the moving scene,
And recognize the slow-retiring fair.
Now this is fulsome, and offends me more 455
Than in a churchman slovenly neglect
And rustic coarseness would. An heavenly mind
May be indifferent to her house of clay,
And slight the hovel as beneath her care
But how a body so fantastic, trim, 460
And quaint in its deportment and attire,
Can lodge an heavenly mind,—demands a doubt.
He that negotiates between God and man,
As God's ambassador, the grand concerns
Of judgement and of mercy, should beware 465
Of lightness in his speech. 'Tis pitiful
To court a grin, when you should woo a soul;
To break a jest, when pity would inspire
Pathetic exhortation; and to address
The skittish fancy with facetious tales, 470
When sent with God's commission to the heart.
So did not Paul. Direct me to a quip
Or merry turn in all he ever wrote,
And I consent you take it for your text,
Your only one, till sides and benches fail. 475
No: he was serious in a serious cause,
And understood too well the weighty terms
That he had ta'en in charge. He would not stoop
To conquer those by jocular exploits,
Whom truth and soberness assail'd in vain. 480
Oh, popular applause [21]! what heart of man
Is proof against thy sweet seducing charms?
The wisest and the best feel urgent need
Of all their caution in thy gentlest gales;

[21] The love of praise, howe'er conceal'd by art,
Reigns more or less, and glows, in every heart;
The proud to gain it, toils on toils endure,
The modest shun it but to make it sure.
Young. Satire i.

But swell'd into a gust,—who then, alas! 485
With all his canvass set, and inexpert
And therefore heedless, can withstand thy power?
Praise from the rivel'd lips of toothless, bald
Decrepitude; and in the looks of lean
And craving poverty; and in the bow 490
Respectful of the smutch'd artificer[22]
Is oft too welcome, and may much disturb
The bias of the purpose. How much more
Pour'd forth by beauty splendid and polite,
In language soft as adoration breathes? 495
Ah spare your idol! think him human still;
Charms he may have, but he has frailties too;
Dote not too much, nor spoil what ye admire
All truth is from the sempiternal source
Of light divine. But Egypt, Greece, and Rome 500
Drew from the stream below. More favour'd we
Drink, when we choose it, at the fountain head.
To them it flow'd much mingled and defiled
With hurtful error, prejudice, and dreams
Illusive of philosophy, so call'd, 505
But falsely. Sages after sages strove
In vain, to filter off a chrystal draught
Pure from the lees, which often more enhanced
The thirst than slaked it, and not seldom bred
Intoxication and delirium wild. 510
In vain they push'd enquiry to the birth
And spring-time of the world, asked, whence is man?
Why form'd at all? And wherefore as he is?
Where must he find his Maker? With what rites
Adore him? Will He hear, accept, and bless? 515
Or does he sit regardless of his works?
Has man within him an immortal seed?
Or does the tomb take all? If he survive
His ashes, where? and in what weal or woe?
Knots worthy of solution, which alone 520
A Deity could solve. Their answers vague
And all at random, fabulous and dark,
Left them as dark themselves. Their rules of life
Defective and unsanction'd, proved too weak

[22] Another lean unwashed artificer. *King John.*

To bind the roving appetite, and lead 525
Blind Nature to a God not yet reveal'd.
'Tis Revelation satisfies all doubts,
Explains all mysteries except her own,
And so illuminates the path of life
That fools discover it, and stray no more. 530
Now tell me, dignified and sapient sir,
My man of morals, nurtured in the shades
Of Academus, is this false or true?
Is Christ the abler teacher, or the schools?
If Christ, then why resort at every turn 535
To Athens or to Rome for wisdom short
Of man's occasions, when in Him reside
Grace, knowledge, comfort, an unfathom'd store?
How oft when Paul has served us with a text,
Has Epictetus, Plato, Tully preach'd! 540
Men that, if now alive, would sit content
And humble learners of a Saviour's worth,
Preach it who might[23]. Such was their love of truth,
Their thirst of knowledge, and their candour too.
And thus it is. The pastor, either vain 545
By nature, or by flattery made so, taught
To gaze at his own splendour, and to exalt
Absurdly, not his office, but himself;
Or unenlighten'd, and too proud to learn,
Or vicious, and not therefore apt to teach, 550
Perverting often by the stress of lewd
And loose example, whom he should instruct,
Exposes and holds up to broad disgrace
The noblest function, and discredits much
The brightest truths that man has ever seen. 555
For ghostly counsel, if it either fall
Below the exigence, or be not back'd
With show of love, at least with hopeful proof
Of some sincerity on the giver's part;
Or be dishonour'd in the exterior form 560
And mode of its conveyance, by such tricks
As move derision, or by foppish airs

[23] Men whose life, learning, faith, and pure intent
Would have been held in high esteem with Paul.
Milton. Sonnet xix.

And histrionic mummery, that let down
The pulpit to the level of the stage,
Drops from the lips a disregarded thing[24]. 565
The weak perhaps are moved, but are not taught,
While prejudice in men of stronger minds
Takes deeper root, confirm'd by what they see.
A relaxation of religion's hold
Upon the roving and untutor'd heart 570
Soon follows, and the curb of conscience snapt,
The laity run wild.—But do they now?
Note their extravagance, and be convinced.
As nations ignorant of God, contrive
A wooden one, so we, no longer taught 575
By monitors that mother church supplies,
Now make our own. Posterity will ask
(If e'er posterity see verse of mine,)
Some fifty or an hundred lustrums hence,
What was a monitor in George's days? 580
My very gentle reader, yet unborn,
Of whom I needs must augur better things,
Since Heaven would sure grow weary of a world
Productive only of a race like us,
A monitor is wood. Plank shaven thin. 585
We wear it at our backs. There closely braced
And neatly fitted, it compresses hard
The prominent and most unsightly bones,
And binds the shoulders flat. We prove its use
Sovereign and most effectual to secure 590
A form not now gymnastic as of yore,
From rickets and distortion, else, our lot.
But thus admonish'd we can walk erect,
One proof at least of manhood; while the friend
Sticks close, a Mentor worthy of his charge. 595
Our habits costlier than Lucullus wore,
And by caprice as multiplied as his,
Just please us while the fashion is at full,
But change with every moon. The sycophant
That waits to dress us, arbitrates their date, 600
Surveys his fair reversion with keen eye;

[24] Flaunts and goes down an unregarded thing.
Pope. Moral Essays, ii. 252.

Finds one ill made, another obsolete,
This fits not nicely, that is ill conceived,
And making prize of all that he condemns,
With our expenditure defrays his own. 605
Variety's the very spice of life
That gives it all its flavour. We have run
Through every change that fancy at the loom
Exhausted, has had genius to supply,
And studious of mutation still, discard 610
A real elegance a little used
For monstrous novelty and strange disguise.
We sacrifice to dress, till household joys
And comforts cease. Dress drains our cellar dry,
And keeps our larder lean. Puts out our fires, 615
And introduces hunger, frost, and woe,
Where peace and hospitality might reign.
What man that lives and that knows how to live,
Would fail to exhibit at the public shows
A form as splendid as the proudest there, 620
Though appetite raise outcries at the cost?
A man of the town dines late, but soon enough
With reasonable forecast and dispatch,
To insure a side-box station at half price.
You think perhaps, so delicate his dress, 625
His daily fare as delicate. Alas!
He picks clean teeth, and busy as he seems
With an old tavern quill, is hungry yet.
The rout is folly's circle which she draws
With magic wand. So potent is the spell, 630
That none decoy'd into that fatal ring,
Unless by Heaven's peculiar grace, escape.
There we grow early grey, but never wise;
There form connexions, and acquire no friend;
Solicit pleasure hopeless of success; 635
Waste youth in occupations only fit
For second childhood, and devote old age
To sports which only childhood could excuse[25].

[25] At last to follies youth could scarce defend,
It grows their age's prudence to pretend;

There they are happiest who dissemble best
Their weariness ; and they the most polite 640
Who squander time and treasure with a smile,
Though at their own destruction. She that asks
Her dear five hundred friends, contemns them all,
And hates their coming. They, what can they less ?
Make just reprisals, and with cringe and shrug 645
And bow obsequious, hide their hate of her[26].
All catch the frenzy, downward from her Grace,
Whose flambeaux flash against the morning skies
And gild our chamber ceilings as they pass,
To her who, frugal only that her thrift 650
May feed excesses she can ill afford,
Is hackney'd home unlackey'd,—who in haste
Alighting, turns the key in her own door,
And at the watchman's lantern borrowing light,
Finds a cold bed her only comfort left. 655
Wives beggar husbands, husbands starve their wives,
On Fortune's velvet altar offering up
Their last poor pittance ;—Fortune most severe
Of goddesses yet known, and costlier far
Than all that held their routs in heathen heaven.—
So fare we in this prison-house the world : 661
And 'tis a fearful spectacle to see
So many maniacs dancing in their chains.
They gaze upon the links that hold them fast
With eyes of anguish, execrate their lot, 665
Then shake them in despair, and dance again.
Now basket up the family of plagues
That waste our vitals. Peculation, sale
Of honour, perjury, corruption, frauds
By forgery, by subterfuge of law, 670

Ashamed to own they gave delight before,
Reduced to feign it when they give no more :
As hags hold sabbaths less for joy than spite,
So these their merry, miserable night.
Pope. Moral Essays. Epist. ii. 235.

[26] What though the dome be wanting, whose proud gate
Each morning vomits out the sneaking crowd
Of flatterers false, and in their turn abused,
Vile intercourse. *Thomson. Autumn,* 1243.

By tricks and lies as numerous and as keen
As the necessities their authors feel;
Then cast them closely bundled, every brat
At the right door. Profusion is its sire.
Profusion unrestrain'd, with all that's base 675
In character, has litter'd all the land,
And bred within the memory of no few,
A priesthood such as Baal's was of old,
A people such as never was till now.
It is a hungry vice:—it eats up all 680
That gives society its beauty, strength,
Convenience, and security, and use;
Makes men mere vermin, worthy to be trapp'd
And gibbeted as fast as catchpole claws
Can seize the slippery prey; unties the knot 685
Of union, and converts the sacred band
That holds mankind together, to a scourge.
Profusion deluging a state with lusts
Of grossest nature and of worst effects,
Prepares it for its ruin; hardens, blinds, 690
And warps the consciences of public men
Till they can laugh at virtue, mock the fools
That trust them, and in the end disclose a face
That would have shock'd credulity herself
Unmask'd, vouchsafing this their sole excuse, 695
Since all alike are selfish,—why not they?
This does Profusion, and the accursed cause
Of such deep mischief, has itself a cause.

In colleges and halls, in ancient days,
When learning, virtue, piety and truth 700
Were precious, and inculcated with care,
There dwelt a sage call'd Discipline. His head
Not yet by time completely silver'd o'er,
Bespoke him past the bounds of freakish youth,
But strong for service still, and unimpair'd. 705
His eye was meek and gentle, and a smile
Play'd on his lips, and in his speech was heard
Paternal sweetness, dignity, and love[27].
The occupation dearest to his heart

[27] In every gesture dignity and love.
Par. Lost, viii. 489.

Was to encourage goodness. He would stroke 710
The head of modest and ingenuous worth
That blush'd at its own praise, and press the youth
Close to his side that pleased him. Learning grew
Beneath his care, a thriving vigorous plant;
The mind was well inform'd, the passions held 715
Subordinate, and diligence was choice.
If e'er it chanced, as sometimes chance it must,
That one among so many overleap'd
The limits of control, his gentle eye
Grew stern, and darted a severe rebuke; 720
His frown was full of terror, and his voice
Shook the delinquent with such fits of awe
As left him not, till penitence had won
Lost favour back again, and closed the breach.
But Discipline, a faithful servant long, 725
Declined at length into the vale of years;
A palsy struck his arm, his sparkling eye
Was quench'd in rheums of age, his voice unstrung
Grew tremulous, and moved derision more
Than reverence, in perverse rebellious youth, 730
So colleges and halls neglected much
Their good old friend, and Discipline at length
O'erlook'd and unemploy'd, fell sick and died.
Then study languish'd, emulation slept,
And virtue fled. The schools became a scene 735
Of solemn farce, where ignorance in stilts,
His cap well lined with logic not his own,
With parrot tongue perform'd the scholar's part,
Proceeding soon a graduated dunce.
Then compromise had place, and scrutiny 740
Became stone-blind, precedence went in truck,
And he was competent whose purse was so.
A dissolution of all bonds ensued,
The curbs invented for the mulcish mouth
Of headstrong youth were broken; bars and bolts 745
Grew rusty by disuse, and massy gates
Forgot their office, opening with a touch;
Till gowns at length are found mere masquerade;
The tassell'd cap and the spruce band a jest,
A mockery of the world. What need of these 750

For gamesters, jockies, brothellers impure,
Spendthrifts and booted sportsmen, oftener seen
With belted waist and pointers at their heels,
Than in the bounds of duty? What was learn'd,
If aught was learn'd in childhood, is forgot, 755
And such expense as pinches parents blue,
And mortifies the liberal hand of love,
Is squander'd in pursuit of idle sports
And vicious pleasures; buys the boy a name
That sits a stigma on his father's house, 760
And cleaves through life inseparably close
To him that wears it. What can after-games
Of riper joys, and commerce with the world,
The lewd vain world that must receive him soon,
Add to such erudition thus acquired 765
Where science and where virtue are profess'd?
They may confirm his habits, rivet fast
His folly[28], but to spoil him is a task
That bids defiance to the united powers
Of fashion, dissipation, taverns, stews. 770
Now blame we most the nurselings or the nurse?
The children crook'd and twisted and deform'd
Through want of care, or her whose winking eye
And slumbering oscitancy mars the brood?
The nurse no doubt. Regardless of her charge 775
She needs herself correction; needs to learn
That it is dangerous sporting with the world,
With things so sacred as a nation's trust,
The nurture of her youth, her dearest pledge.
All are not such. I had a brother once,— 780
Peace to the memory of a man of worth,
A man of letters, and of manners too;
Of manners sweet as virtue always wears,
When gay good-nature dresses her in smiles.
He graced a college[29] in which order yet 785

[28] The sensual and the dark rebel in vain—
Slaves by their own compulsion. *Coleridge.*
It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters.
Burke. Answer to Objections, &c. 69.

[29] Ben'et College, Cambridge.

Was sacred, and was honour'd, loved and wept[30]
By more than one, themselves conspicuous there.
Some minds are temper'd happily, and mixt
With such ingredients of good sense and taste
Of what is excellent in man, they thirst 790
With such a zeal to be what they approve,
That no restraints can circumscribe them more,
Than they themselves by choice, for wisdom's sake.
Nor can example hurt them, what they see
Of vice in others but enhancing more 795
The charms of virtue in their just esteem.
If such escape contagion, and emerge
Pure from so foul a pool, to shine abroad,
And give the world their talents and themselves,
Small thanks to those whose negligence or sloth 800
Exposed their inexperience to the snare,
And left them to an undirected choice.
  See then! the quiver broken and decay'd
In which are kept our arrows. Rusting there
In wild disorder and unfit for use, 805
What wonder if discharged into the world
They shame their shooters with a random flight,
Their points obtuse, and feathers drunk with wine.
Well may the church wage unsuccessful war
With such artillery arm'd. Vice parries wide 810
The undreaded volley with a sword of straw,
And stands an impudent and fearless mark.
  Have we not track'd the felon home, and found
His birthplace and his dam? the country mourns,
Mourns, because every plague that can infest 815
Society, and that saps and worms the base
Of the edifice that policy has raised,
Swarms in all quarters; meets the eye, the ear,
And suffocates the breath at every turn.
Profusion breeds them. And the cause itself 820
Of that calamitous mischief has been found;
Found too where most offensive, in the skirts
Of the robed pedagogue. Else, let the arraign'd
Stand up unconscious and refute the charge.

[30] Praised, wept, and honour'd by the Muse he loved.
Pope on Craggs.

So when the Jewish Leader stretch'd his arm 825
And waved his rod divine, a race obscene
Spawn'd in the muddy beds of Nile, came forth
Polluting Egypt. Gardens, fields, and plains
Were cover'd with the pest. The streets were fill'd;
The croaking nuisance lurk'd in every nook, 830
Nor palaces nor even chambers 'scaped,
And the land stank, so numerous was the fry.

THE TASK.

BOOK III.

ARGUMENT OF THE THIRD BOOK.

Self-recollection and reproof. Address to domestic happiness. Some account of myself. The vanity of many of their pursuits who are reputed wise. Justification of my censures. Divine illumination necessary to the most expert philosopher. The question, What is truth? answered by other questions. Domestic happiness addressed again. Few lovers of the country. My tame hare. Occupations of a retired gentleman in his garden. Pruning. Framing. Greenhouse. Sowing of flower-seeds. The country preferable to the town even in the winter. Reasons why it is deserted at that season Ruinous effects of gaming and of expensive improvement. Book concludes with an apostrophe to the metropolis.

THE GARDEN.

As one who long in thickets and in brakes[1]
Entangled, winds now this way and now that,
His devious course uncertain, seeking home;
Or having long in miry ways been foiled
And sore discomfited, from slough to slough 5
Plunging, and half despairing of escape,
If chance[2] at length he find a green-sward smooth

[1] As one who long in populous city pent,
Where houses thick, and sewers annoy the air,
Forth issuing on a summer's morn to breathe
Among the pleasant villages and farms
Adjoin'd, from each thing met conceives delight.
Par. Lost, ix. 445.

[2] If chance with nymph-like step fair virgin pass,
What pleasing seem'd, for her now pleases more,
She most, and in her look sums all delight;
Such pleasure took the serpent to behold
This flowery plat, the sweet recess of Eve
Thus early, thus alone. *Par. Lost*, ix. 452.

And faithful to the foot, his spirits rise,
He chirrups brisk his ear-erecting steed,
And winds his way with pleasure and with ease; 10
So I, designing other themes, and call'd
To adorn the Sofa with eulogium due,
To tell its slumbers and to paint its dreams,
Have rambled wide. In country, city, seat
Of academic fame, (howe'er deserved,) 15
Long held and scarcely disengaged at last.
But now with pleasant pace, a cleanlier road
I mean to tread. I feel myself at large,
Courageous, and refresh'd for future toil,
If toil await me, or if dangers new[3]. 20
Since pulpits fail, and sounding-boards reflect
Most part an empty ineffectual sound,
What chance that I, to fame so little known,
Nor conversant with men or manners much,
Should speak to purpose, or with better hope 25
Crack the satiric thong? 'Twere wiser far
For me enamour'd of sequester'd scenes,
And charm'd with rural beauty, to repose
Where chance may throw me, beneath elm or vine,
My languid limbs when summer sears the plains, 30
Or when rough winter rages, on the soft
And shelter'd Sofa, while the nitrous air
Feeds a blue flame and makes a cheerful hearth;
There undisturb'd by Folly, and apprized
How great the danger of disturbing her, 35
To muse in silence, or at least confine
Remarks that gall so many, to the few
My partners in retreat. Disgust conceal'd
Is oft-times proof of wisdom, when the fault
Is obstinate, and cure beyond our reach. 40
Domestic happiness, thou only bliss
Of Paradise that has survived the fall!
Though few now taste thee unimpair'd and pure,
Or tasting, long enjoy thee, too infirm
Or too incautious to preserve thy sweets 45
Unmix'd with drops of bitter, which neglect

[3] To-morrow to fresh woods and pasture new.
Lycidas, 198.

Or temper sheds into thy crystal cup;
Thou art the nurse of virtue. In thine arms
She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,
Heaven-born and destined to the skies again. 50
Thou art not known where Pleasure is adored,
That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist
And wandering eyes, still leaning on the arm
Of Novelty, her fickle frail support;
For thou art meek and constant, hating change, 55
And finding in the calm of truth-tied love
Joys that her stormy raptures never yield.
Forsaking thee, what shipwreck have we made
Of honour, dignity, and fair renown,
Till prostitution elbows us aside 60
In all our crowded streets, and senates seem
Convened for purposes of empire less,
Than to release the adulteress from her bond.
The adulteress! what a theme for angry verse,
What provocation to the indignant heart 65
That feels for injured love! but I disdain
The nauseous task to paint her as she is,
Cruel, abandon'd, glorying in her shame.
No. Let her pass, and charioted along
In guilty splendour, shake the public ways! 70
The frequency of crimes has wash'd them white;
And verse of mine shall never brand the wretch,
Whom matrons now of character unsmirched
And chaste themselves, are not ashamed to own.
Virtue and vice had boundaries in old time 75
Not to be pass'd; and she that had renounced
Her sex's honour, was renounced herself
By all that prized it; not for prudery's sake,
But dignity's, resentful of the wrong.
'Twas hard perhaps on here and there a waif 80
Desirous to return and not received;
But was an wholesome rigour in the main,
And taught the unblemish'd to preserve with care
That purity, whose loss was loss of all.
Men too were nice in honour in those days, 85
And judged offenders well. And he that sharp'd,
And pocketed a prize by fraud obtain'd,

Was mark'd and shunn'd as odious. He that sold
His country, or was slack when she required
His every nerve in action and at stretch, 90
Paid with the blood that he had basely spared
The price of his default. But now, yes, now,
We are become so candid and so fair,
So liberal in construction, and so rich
In christian charity, a good-natured age! 95
That they are safe, sinners of either sex,
Transgress what laws they may. Well dress'd, well bred,
Well equipaged, is ticket good enough
To pass us readily through every door.
Hypocrisy[4], detest her as we may, 100
(And no man's hatred ever wrong'd her yet,)
May claim this merit still, that she admits
The worth of what she mimics with such care,
And thus gives virtue indirect applause;
But she has burnt her mask not needed here, 105
Where vice has such allowance, that her shifts
And specious semblances have lost their use.
I was a stricken deer that left the herd
Long since; with many an arrow deep infixt
My panting side was charged when I withdrew 110
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
There was I found by one who had himself
Been hurt by the archers. In his side he bore
And in his hands and feet the cruel scars.
With gentle force soliciting the darts 115
He drew them forth, and heal'd and bade me live.
Since then, with few associates, in remote
And silent woods I wander, far from those
My former partners of the peopled scene,
With few associates, and not wishing more. 120
Here much I ruminate, as much I may,
With other views of men and manners now
Than once, and others of a life to come.
I see that all are wanderers, gone astray,
Each in his own delusions; they are lost 125
In chase of fancied happiness, still wooed

[4] Hypocrisy is the homage that vice pays to virtue.
Rochefoucald, 460.

And never won. Dream after dream ensues,
And still they dream that they shall still succeed,
And still are disappointed; rings the world
With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind, 130
And add two-thirds of the remainder half,
And find the total of their hopes and fears
Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay
As if created only, like the fly
That spreads his motley wings in the eye of noon, 135
To sport their season and be seen no more.
The rest are sober dreamers, grave and wise,
And pregnant with discoveries new and rare.
Some write a narrative of wars and feats
Of heroes little known, and call the rant 140
An history[5]; describe the man, of whom
His own coevals took but little note,
And paint his person, character and views,
As they had known him from his mother's womb.
They disentangle from the puzzled skein 145
In which obscurity has wrapp'd them up,
The threads of politic and shrewd design
That ran through all his purposes, and charge
His mind with meanings[6] that he never had,
Or having, kept conceal'd. Some drill and bore 150
The solid earth, and from the strata there
Extract a register, by which we learn
That He who made it and reveal'd its date
To Moses, was mistaken in its age.
Some more acute and more industrious still 155
Contrive creation; travel nature up
To the sharp peak of her sublimest height,

[5] Then came Domitian, dragging in Suetonius: There is no greater pest, said he, than that generation of scribbling rogues the historians,—when they have vented the humour and caprice of their own brains, that forsooth must be called—"the Life of such an Emperor."

Quevedo. Vision vii.

[6] Great actions, the lustre of which dazzles us, are by politicians represented as the effects of deep designs, whereas they are commonly the effects of caprice and passion.—*Rochefoucald. Maxim* vii.

These leave the sense their learning to display,
And these explain the meaning quite away.

Pope. Essay on Crit. 116.

And tell us whence the stars; why some are fixt,
And planetary some; what gave them first
Rotation, from what fountain flow'd their light. 160
Great contest follows, and much learned dust
Involves the combatants, each claiming truth,
And truth disclaiming both[7]. And thus they spend
The little wick of life's poor shallow lamp,
In playing tricks with nature, giving laws 165
To distant worlds and trifling in their own.
Is 't not a pity now that tickling rheums
Should ever tease the lungs and blear the sight
Of oracles like these? Great pity too,
That having wielded the elements, and built 170
A thousand systems, each in his own way,
They should go out in fume and be forgot?
Ah! what is life thus spent? and what are they
But frantic who thus spend it? all for smoke,—
Eternity for bubbles, proves at last 175
A senseless bargain[8]. When I see such games
Play'd by the creatures of a Power who swears
That he will judge the earth, and call the fool[9]
To a sharp reckoning that has lived in vain;
And when I weigh this seeming wisdom well 180
And prove it in the infallible result
So hollow and so false,—I feel my heart
Dissolve in pity, and account the learn'd,
If this be learning, most of all deceived.
Great crimes alarm the conscience, but she sleeps 185

[7] He his fabric of the heavens
Hath left to their disputes, perhaps to move
His laughter at their quaint opinions wide
Hereafter, when they come to model heaven
And calculate the stars, how they will wield
The mighty frame, how build, unbuild, contrive,
To save appearances. *Par. Lost*, viii. 76.

[8] What win I, if I gain the thing I seek?
A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy:
Who buys a minute's worth to wail a week,
Or sells eternity to get a toy?
Shakespeare. Tarq. and Luc. st. 31.

[9] Go, teach eternal Wisdom how to rule,
Then drop into thyself, and be a fool.
Pope. Essay on Man, ii. 29.

While thoughtful man is plausibly amused.
Defend me therefore common sense, say I,
From reveries so airy, from the toil
Of dropping buckets into empty wells[10],
And growing old in drawing nothing up! 190
'Twere well, says one sage erudite, profound,
Terribly arch'd and aquiline his nose,
And overbuilt with most impending brows,
'Twere well could you permit the world to live
As the world pleases. What's the world to you?— 195
Much. I was born of woman, and drew milk
As sweet as charity from human breasts.
I think, articulate, I laugh and weep
And exercise all functions of a man.
How then should I and any man that lives 200
Be strangers to each other[11]? Pierce my vein,
Take of the crimson stream meandering there
And catechise it well. Apply your glass,
Search it, and prove now if it be not blood
Congenial with thine own. And if it be, 205
What edge of subtlety canst thou suppose
Keen enough, wise and skilful as thou art,
To cut the link of brotherhood, by which
One common Maker bound me to the kind?
True; I am no proficient, I confess, 210
In arts like yours. I cannot call the swift
And perilous lightnings from the angry clouds,
And bid them hide themselves in the earth beneath;
I cannot analyse the air, nor catch
The parallax of yonder luminous point 215
That seems half quench'd in the immense abyss:
Such powers I boast not;—neither can I rest
A silent witness of the headlong rage
Or heedless folly by which thousands die,
Bone of my bone, and kindred souls to mine. 220
God never meant that man should scale the heavens
By strides of human wisdom. In his works

[10] Nor vainly buys what Gildon sells,
Poetic buckets for dry wells. *Spleen.*

[11] *Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.*
Ter. Heaut.

Though wonderous, He commands us in his word
To seek him rather, where his mercy shines.
The mind indeed enlighten'd from above 225
Views him in all; ascribes to the grand cause
The grand effect; acknowledges with joy
His manner, and with rapture tastes his style.
But never yet did philosophic tube
That brings the planets home into the eye 230
Of observation, and discovers, else
Not visible, his family of worlds,
Discover Him that rules them; such a veil
Hangs over mortal eyes, blind from the birth
And dark in things divine. Full often too 235
Our wayward intellect, the more we learn
Of nature, overlooks her Author more,
From instrumental causes proud to draw
Conclusions retrograde and mad mistake.
But if his word once teach us, shoot a ray 240
Through all the heart's dark chambers, and reveal
Truths undiscern'd but by that holy light,
Then all is plain. Philosophy baptized
In the pure fountain of eternal love
Has eyes indeed; and viewing all she sees 245
As meant to indicate a God to man,
Gives *Him* his praise, and forfeits not her own.
Learning has borne such fruit in other days
On all her branches. Piety has found
Friends in the friends of science, and true prayer 250
Has flow'd from lips wet with Castalian dews.
Such was thy wisdom, Newton, child-like sage!
Sagacious reader of the works of God,
And in his word sagacious. Such too thine,
Milton, whose genius had angelic wings, 255
And fed on manna. And such thine in whom
Our British Themis gloried with just cause,
Immortal Hale! for deep discernment praised
And sound integrity not more, than famed
For sanctity of manners undefiled. 260
All flesh is grass[12], and all its glory fades

[12] Isaiah, xl. 6.

Like the fair flower dishevel'd in the wind;
Riches have wings[13], and grandeur is a dream;
The man we celebrate must find a tomb,
And we that worship him, ignoble graves. 265
Nothing is proof against the general curse
Of vanity, that seizes all below.
The only amaranthine flower on earth
Is virtue, the only lasting treasure, truth.
But what is truth[14]? 'twas Pilate's question put 270
To Truth itself, that deign'd him no reply.
And wherefore? will not God impart his light
To them that ask it?—Freely;—'tis his joy,
His glory, and his nature to impart:
But to the proud, uncandid, insincere 275
Or negligent enquirer, not a spark.
What's that which brings contempt upon a book
And him that writes it, though the style be neat,
The method clear, and argument exact?
That makes a minister in holy things 280
The joy of many and the dread of more,
His name a theme for praise and for reproach?
That while it gives us worth in God's account,
Depreciates and undoes us in our own?
What pearl is it that rich men cannot buy, 285
That learning is too proud to gather up,
But which the poor and the despised of all
Seek and obtain, and often find unsought?
Tell me, and I will tell thee, what is truth.
Oh friendly to the best pursuits of man, 290
Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,
Domestic life in rural leisure pass'd[15]!

13 Prov. xxiii. 5.

14 Bacon otherwise—"What is truth? said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer."—*Essay* i.

15 O knew he but his happiness, of men
The happiest he! who far from public rage
Deep in the vale with a choice few retired,
Drinks the pure pleasures of the rural life.
Thomson. Autumn, 1389.

O sacred solitude! divine retreat!
Choice of the prudent, envy of the great,

Few know thy value, and few taste thy sweets,
Though many boast thy favours, and affect
To understand and chuse thee for their own. 295
But foolish man foregoes his proper bliss
Even as his first progenitor, and quits,
Though placed in paradise, (for earth has still
Some traces of her youthful beauty left,)
Substantial happiness for transient joy. 300
Scenes form'd for contemplation, and to nurse
The growing seeds of wisdom; that suggest
By every pleasing image they present
Reflections such as meliorate the heart,
Compose the passions and exalt the mind, 305
Scenes such as these, 'tis his supreme delight
To fill with riot and defile with blood.
Should some contagion kind to the poor brutes
We persecute, annihilate the tribes
That draw the sportsman over hill and dale 310
Fearless, and rapt away from all his cares;
Should never game-fowl-hatch her eggs again,
Nor baited hook[16] deceive the fish's eye;
Could pageantry and dance and feast and song
Be quell'd in all our summer-month retreats; 315
How many self-deluded nymphs and swains
Who dream they have a taste for fields and groves,
Would find them hideous nurseries of the spleen,
And crowd the roads, impatient for the town!
They love the country, and none else, who seek 320
For their own sake its silence and its shade;
Delights which who would leave, that has a heart

By thy pure stream, or in thy waving shade
We court fair wisdom, that celestial maid;
The genuine offspring of her loved embrace,
Strangers on earth! are innocence and peace.
There from the ways of men laid safe ashore,
We smile to hear the distant tempest roar;
There bless'd with health, with business unperplex'd,
This life we relish, and ensure the next.

Young. Satire v.

[16] They triumph over the unsuspecting fish, whom they have decoyed by an insidious pretence of feeding.

Soame Jenyns. Second Disquisition.

Susceptible of pity, or a mind
Cultured and capable of sober thought,
For all the savage din of the swift pack 325
And clamours of the field? detested sport,
That owes its pleasures to another's pain,
That feeds upon the sobs and dying shrieks
Of harmless nature, dumb, but yet endued
With eloquence that agonies inspire 330
Of silent tears and heart-distending sighs!
Vain tears alas! and sighs that never find
A corresponding tone in jovial souls.
Well,—one at least is safe. One shelter'd hare
Has never heard the sanguinary yell 335
Of cruel man, exulting in her woes.
Innocent partner of my peaceful home,
Whom ten long years experience of my care
Has made at last familiar, she has lost
Much of her vigilant instinctive dread, 340
Not needful here, beneath a roof like mine.
Yes,—thou may'st eat thy bread, and lick the hand
That feeds thee; thou may'st frolic on the floor
At evening, and at night retire secure
To thy straw-couch, and slumber unalarm'd. 345
For I have gain'd thy confidence, have pledged
All that is human in me, to protect
Thine unsuspecting gratitude and love.
If I survive thee I will dig thy grave,
And when I place thee in it, sighing say, 350
I knew at least one hare that had a friend[17].
How various his employments, whom the world
Calls idle, and who justly in return
Esteems that busy world an idler too!
Friends[18], books, a garden, and perhaps his pen, 355
Delightful industry enjoyed at home,
And nature in her cultivated trim

[17] The allusion is to one of Gay's fables, which in the last generation most children knew by heart. In how different a spirit is Byron's epitaph on his dog!

To mark a friend's remains these stones arise,
I never knew but one, and here he lies.

[18] A friend, a book, the stealing hours secure,
And mark them down for wisdom.—*Thomson. Autumn*, 1337.

Dressed to his taste, inviting him abroad :—
Can he want occupation who has these?
Will he be idle who has much to enjoy? 360
Me therefore, studious of laborious ease,
Not slothful; happy to deceive the time
Not waste it; and aware that human life
Is but a loan to be repaid with use,
When He shall call his debtors to account, 365
From whom are all our blessings, business finds
Even here. While sedulous I seek to improve,
At least neglect not, or leave unemploy'd
The mind he gave me; driving it, though slack
Too oft, and much impeded in its work 370
By causes not to be divulged in vain,
To its just point the service of mankind.
He that attends to his interior self,
That has a heart and keeps it, has a mind
That hungers and supplies it, and who seeks 375
A social, not a dissipated life,
Has business; feels himself engaged to achieve
No unimportant, though a silent task.
A life all turbulence and noise may seem
To him that leads it, wise and to be praised; 380
But wisdom is a pearl with most success
Sought in still water, and beneath clear skies.
He that is ever occupied in storms,
Or dives not for it, or brings up instead,
Vainly industrious, a disgraceful prize. 385
  The morning finds the self-sequester'd man
Fresh for his task, intend what task he may.
Whether inclement seasons recommend
His warm but simple home, where he enjoys
With her who shares his pleasures and his heart, 390
Sweet converse, sipping calm the fragrant lymph
Which neatly she prepares; then to his book
Well chosen, and not sullenly perused
In selfish silence, but imparted oft
As aught occurs that she may smile to hear 395
Or turn to nourishment digested well.
Or if the garden with its many cares,
All well repay'd, demand him, he attends

The welcome call, conscious how much the hand
Of lubbard labour needs his watchful eye, 400
Oft loitering lazily if not o'erseen,
Or misapplying his unskilful strength.
Nor does he govern only or direct,
But much performs himself; no works indeed
That ask robust tough sinews bred to toil, 405
Servile employ,—but such as may amuse,
Not tire, demanding rather skill than force.
Proud of his well-spread walls, he views his trees
That meet, (no barren interval between,)
With pleasure more than even their fruits afford, 410
Which, save himself who trains them, none can feel.
These therefore are his own peculiar charge;
No meaner hand may discipline the shoots,
None but his steel approach them. What is weak,
Distemper'd, or has lost prolific powers 415
Impair'd by age, his unrelenting hand
Dooms to the knife. Nor does he spare the soft
And succulent that feeds its giant growth
But barren, at the expense of neighbouring twigs
Less ostentatious, and yet studded thick 420
With hopeful gems. The rest, no portion left
That may disgrace his art, or disappoint
Large expectation, he disposes neat
At measured distances, that air and sun
Admitted freely may afford their aid, 425
And ventilate and warm the swelling buds.
Hence summer has her riches, autumn hence,
And hence even winter fills his wither'd hand
With blushing fruits, and plenty not his own[19].
Fair recompense of labour well bestow'd 430
And wise precaution, which a clime so rude
Makes needful still, whose Spring is but the child
Of churlish Winter, in her froward moods
Discovering much the temper of her sire.
For oft, as if in her the stream of mild 435
Maternal nature had reversed its course,
She brings her infants forth with many smiles,
But once deliver'd, kills them with a frown.

[19] *Miraturque novos fructus et non sua poma.* Virg. C.

He therefore, timely warn'd, himself supplies
Her want of care, screening and keeping warm 440
The plenteous bloom, that no rough blast may sweep
His garlands from the boughs. Again, as oft
As the sun peeps and vernal airs breathe mild,
The fence withdrawn, he gives them every beam,
And spreads his hopes before the blaze of day. 445
  To raise the prickly and green-coated gourd
So grateful to the palate, and when rare
So coveted, else base and disesteem'd,—
Food for the vulgar merely,—is an art
That toiling ages have but just matured, 450
And at this moment unessay'd in song.
Yet gnats have had, and frogs and mice long since
Their eulogy; those sang the Mantuan bard,
And these the Grecian in ennobling strains;
And in thy numbers, Phillips, shines for aye 455
The solitary Shilling. Pardon then,
Ye sage dispensers of poetic fame!
The ambition of one meaner far, whose powers
Presuming an attempt not less sublime,
Pant for the praise of dressing to the taste 460
Of critic appetite, no sordid fare,
A cucumber, while costly yet and scarce.
  The stable yields a stercorarious heap
Impregnated with quick fermenting salts,
And potent to resist the freezing blast. 465
For ere the beech and elm have cast their leaf
Deciduous, and when now November dark
Checks vegetation in the torpid plant
Exposed to his cold breath, the task begins.
Warily therefore, and with prudent heed 470
He seeks a favour'd spot, that where he builds
The agglomerated pile, his frame may front
The sun's meridian disk, and at the back
Enjoy close shelter, wall, or reeds, or hedge
Impervious to the wind. First he bids spread 475
Dry fern or litter'd hay, that may imbibe
The ascending damps; then leisurely impose
And lightly, shaking it with agile hand
From the full fork, the saturated straw.

What longest binds the closest, forms secure 480
The shapely side, that as it rises takes
By just degrees an overhanging breadth,
Sheltering the base with its projected eaves.
The uplifted frame compact at every joint,
And overlaid with clear translucent glass, 485
He settles next upon the sloping mount,
Whose sharp declivity shoots off secure
From the dash'd pane the deluge as it falls:
He shuts it close, and the first labour ends.
Thrice must the voluble and restless earth 490
Spin round upon her axle, ere the warmth
Slow gathering in the midst, through the square mass
Diffused, attain the surface. When behold!
A pestilent and most corrosive steam,
Like a gross fog Bœotian, rising fast, 495
And fast condensed upon the dewy sash,
Asks egress; which obtained, the overcharged
And drench'd conservatory breathes abroad
In volumes wheeling slow, the vapour dank,
And purified, rejoices to have lost 500
Its foul inhabitant. But to assuage
The impatient fervour which it first conceives
Within its reeking bosom, threatening death
To his young hopes, requires discreet delay.
Experience, slow preceptress, teaching oft 505
The way to glory by miscarriage foul[19],
Must prompt him, and admonish how to catch
The auspicious moment, when the temper'd heat
Friendly to vital motion, may afford
Soft fermentation, and invite the seed. 510
The seed selected wisely, plump and smooth
And glossy, he commits to pots of size
Diminutive, well fill'd with well-prepared
And fruitful soil, that has been treasured long,

[19] Let us know
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well
When our deep plots do fail. *Hamlet*, v. 2.
Into the right we err, and must confess
To oversights we often owe success.
Dispensary, canto iv.

And drunk no moisture from the dripping clouds. 515
These on the warm and genial earth that hides
The smoking manure and o'erspreads it all,
He places lightly, and as time subdues
The rage of fermentation, plunges deep
In the soft medium, till they stand immersed. 520
Then rise the tender germs upstarting quick
And spreading wide their spongey lobes, at first
Pale, wan, and livid, but assuming soon,
If fann'd by balmy and nutritious air
Strain'd through the friendly mats, a vivid green. 525
Two leaves produced, two rough indented leaves,
Cautious he pinches from the second stalk
A pimple, that portends a future sprout,
And interdicts its growth. Thence straight succeed
The branches, sturdy to his utmost wish, 530
Prolific all, and harbingers of more.
The crowded roots demand enlargement now
And transplantation in an ampler space.
Indulged in what they wish, they soon supply
Large foliage, overshadowing golden flowers, 535
Blown on the summit of the apparent fruit.
These have their sexes; and when summer shines
The bee transports the fertilizing meal
From flower to flower, and even the breathing air
Wafts the rich prize to its appointed use. 540
Not so when winter scowls: assistant art
Then acts in nature's office, brings to pass
The glad espousals and insures the crop.
Grudge not, ye rich, (since luxury must have
His dainties, and the world's more numerous half 545
Lives by contriving delicates for you,)
Grudge not the cost. Ye little know the cares,
The vigilance, the labour, and the skill
That day and night are exercised, and hang
Upon the ticklish balance of suspense, 550
That ye may garnish your profuse regales
With summer fruits brought forth by wintry suns.
Ten thousand dangers lie in wait to thwart
The process. Heat and cold, and wind and steam,
Moisture and drought, mice, worms, and swarming flies

Minute as dust and numberless, oft work 556
Dire disappointment that admits no cure,
And which no care can obviate. It were long,
Too long to tell the expedients and the shifts
Which he that fights a season so severe 560
Devises, while he guards his tender trust,
And oft, at last, in vain. The learn'd and wise
Sarcastic would exclaim, and judge the song
Cold as its theme, and like its theme the fruit
Of too much labour, worthless when produced. 565
Who loves a garden, loves a green-house too.
Unconscious of a less propitious clime
There blooms exotic beauty, warm and snug,
While the winds whistle and the snows descend.
The spiry myrtle with unwithering leaf 570
Shines there and flourishes. The golden boast
Of Portugal and western India there,
The ruddier orange and the paler lime,
Peep through their polish'd foliage at the storm,
And seem to smile at what they need not fear. 575
The amomum there with intermingling flowers
And cherries hangs her twigs. Geranium boasts
Her crimson honours, and the spangled beau
Ficoides, glitters bright the winter long.
All plants of every leaf[20] that can endure 580
The winter's frown, if screen'd from his shrewd bite,
Live there and prosper. Those Ausonia claims,
Levantine regions these; the Azores send
Their jessamine, her jessamine remote
Caffraria; foreigners from many lands 585
They form one social shade, as if convened
By magic summons of the Orphean lyre.
Yet just arrangement, rarely brought to pass
But by a master's hand, disposing well
The gay diversities of leaf and flower, 590
Must lend its aid to illustrate all their charms,
And dress the regular yet various scene.
Plant behind plant aspiring, in the van
The dwarfish, in the rear retired, but still
Sublime above the rest, the statelier stand. 595

[20] Flowers of all hue. *Par. Lost*, iv. 256.

So once were ranged the sons of ancient Rome,
A noble show! while Roscius trod the stage;
And so, while Garrick as renown'd as he,
The sons of Albion,—fearing each to lose
Some note of Nature's music from his lips, 600
And covetous of Shakespeare's[21] beauty seen
In every flash of his far-beaming eye,
Nor taste alone and well-contrived display
Suffice to give the marshal'd ranks the grace
Of their complete effect. Much yet remains 605
Unsung, and many cares are yet behind
And more laborious; cares on which depends
Their vigour, injured soon, not soon restored.
The soil must be renew'd, which often wash'd
Loses its treasure of salubrious salts, 610
And disappoints the roots; the slender roots
Close interwoven where they meet the vase
Must smooth be shorn away; the sapless branch
Must fly before the knife; the wither'd leaf
Must be detach'd, and where it strews the floor 615
Swept with a woman's neatness, breeding else
Contagion, and disseminating death.
Discharge but these kind offices, (and who
Would spare, that loves them, offices like these?)
Well they reward the toil. The sight is pleased, 620
The scent regaled; each odoriferous leaf,
Each opening blossom freely breathes abroad
Its gratitude, and thanks him with its sweets.
So manifold, all pleasing in their kind,
All healthful, are the employs of rural life, 625
Reiterated as the wheel of time
Runs round, still ending, and beginning still.
Nor are these all. To deck the shapely knoll
That softly swell'd and gaily dress'd, appears
A flowery island from the dark green lawn 630
Emerging, must be deem'd a labour due
To no mean hand, and asks the touch of taste.
Here also grateful mixture of well match'd

[21] While friends beheld thee give with eye, voice, mien,
More than theatric force to Shakespeare's scene.
Wordsworth. On Sir G. Beaumont.

And sorted hues, (each giving each relief,
And by contrasted beauty shining more,) 635
Is needful. Strength may wield the ponderous spade[22],
May turn the clod, and wheel the compost home,
But elegance, chief grace the garden shows
And most attractive, is the fair result
Of thought, the creature of a polish'd mind. 640
Without it, all is Gothic as the scene
To which the insipid citizen resorts
Near yonder heath; where industry mispent,
But proud of his uncouth ill-chosen task,
Has made a heaven on earth; with suns and moons 645
Of close-ramm'd stones has charged the incumber'd soil,
And fairly laid the zodiac in the dust.
He therefore who would see his flowers disposed
Sightly and in just order, ere he gives
The beds the trusted treasure of their seeds 650
Forecasts the future whole; that when the scene
Shall break into its preconceived display,
Each for itself, and all as with one voice
Conspiring, may attest his bright design.
Nor even then, dismissing as perform'd 655
His pleasant work, may he suppose it done.
Few self-supported flowers endure the wind
Uninjured, but expect the upholding aid[23]
Of the smooth-shaven prop, and neatly tied
Are wedded thus like beauty to old age, 660
For interest sake, the living to the dead.
Some clothe the soil that feeds them, far diffused

[22] Coarse complexions
And cheeks of sorry grain will serve to ply
The sampler, and to tease the huswife's wool:
What need a vermeil-tinctured lip for that,
Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn?
Comus, 749.

[23] Man, like the generous vine, supported lives,
The strength he gains is from the embrace he gives.
Essay on Man, iii. 311.

Or they led the vine
To wed her elm; she spoused about him twines
Her marriageable arms, and with her brings
Her dower, the adopted clusters, to adorn
His barren leaves. *Par. Lost*, v. 215.

And lowly creeping, modest and yet fair,
Like virtue, thriving most where little seen.
Some more aspiring catch the neighbour shrub 665
With clasping tendrils, and invest his branch
Else unadorn'd, with many a gay festoon
And fragrant chaplet, recompensing well
The strength they borrow with the grace they lend.
All hate the rank society of weeds 670
Noisome, and ever greedy to exhaust
The impoverish'd earth; an overbearing race,
That like the multitude made faction-mad
Disturb good order, and degrade true worth.
Oh blest seclusion from a jarring world 675
Which he thus occupied, enjoys! Retreat
Cannot indeed to guilty man restore
Lost innocence, or cancel follies past;
But it has peace, and much secures the mind
From all assaults of evil, proving still 680
A faithful barrier, not o'erleaped with ease
By vicious custom, raging uncontrol'd
Abroad, and desolating public life.
When fierce temptation seconded within
By traitor appetite, and arm'd with darts 685
Temper'd in hell, invades the throbbing breast,
To combat may be glorious, and success
Perhaps may crown us; but to fly is safe[24].
Had I the choice of sublunary good,
What could I wish, that I possess not here? 690
Health, leisure, means to improve it, friendship, peace;
No loose or wanton, though a wandering muse,
And constant occupation without care.
Thus blest, I draw a picture of that bliss;
Hopeless indeed that dissipated minds, 695
And profligate abusers of a world
Created fair so much in vain for them,
Should seek the guiltless joys that I describe
Allured by my report: but sure no less
That self-condemn'd they must neglect the prize, 700

[24] Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And since 'tis hard to combat learns to fly.
Des. Village.

And what they will not taste, must yet approve.
What we admire we praise; and when we praise
Advance it into notice, that its worth
Acknowledged, others may admire it too.
I therefore recommend, though at the risk 705
Of popular disgust, yet boldly still,
The cause of piety and sacred truth
And virtue, and those scenes which God ordain'd
Should best secure them and promote them most;
Scenes that I love, and with regret perceive 710
Forsaken or through folly not enjoy'd[25].
Pure is the nymph, though liberal of her smiles,
And chaste, though unconfined, whom I extol;
Not as the prince in Sushan, when he call'd
Vain-glorious of her charms his Vashti forth 715
To grace the full pavilion. His design
Was but to boast his own peculiar good,
Which all might view with envy, none partake.
My charmer is not mine alone; my sweets
And she that sweetens all my bitters too, 720
Nature, enchanting Nature, in whose form
And lineaments divine I trace a hand
That errs not, and find raptures still renew'd,
Is free to all men, universal prize.
Strange that so fair a creature should yet want 725
Admirers, and be destined to divide
With meaner objects, even the few she finds.
Stript of her ornaments, her leaves and flowers,
She loses all her influence. Cities then[26]
Attract us, and neglected Nature pines 730
Abandon'd, as unworthy of our love.
But are not wholesome airs, though unperfumed
By roses, and clear suns though scarcely felt,
And groves if unharmonious, yet secure
From clamour, and whose very silence charms, 735

[25] On every thorn delightful wisdom grows,
In every rill a sweet instruction flows;
But some untaught, ne'er hear the whispering rill,
In spite of sacred leisure blockheads still.
Young. Satire i.

[26] Tower'd cities please us then,
And the busy hum of men. *L'Allegro.*

To be preferr'd to smoke, to the eclipse
That metropolitan volcanoes make,
Whose Stygian throats breathe darkness all day long,
And to the stir of commerce, driving slow,
And thundering loud, with his ten thousand wheels? 740
They would be, were not madness in the head
And folly in the heart; were England now
What England was, plain, hospitable, kind,
And undebauch'd. But we have bid farewell
To all the virtues of those better days 745
And all their honest pleasures. Mansions once
Knew their own masters, and laborious hinds
That had survived the father, served the son.
Now the legitimate and rightful Lord
Is but a transient guest, newly arrived 750
And soon to be supplanted. He that saw
His patrimonial timber cast its leaf,
Sells the last scantling, and transfers the price
To some shrewd sharper, ere it buds again.
Estates are landscapes, gazed upon awhile, 755
Then advertised, and auctioneer'd away.
The country starves, and they that feed the o'ercharged
And surfeited lewd town with her fair dues,
By a just judgement strip and starve themselves.
The wings that waft our riches out of sight 760
Grow on the gamester's elbows, and the alert
And nimble motion of those restless joints
That never tire, soon fans them all away.
Improvement too, the idol of the age,
Is fed with many a victim. Lo! he comes,— 765
The omnipotent magician, Brown appears.
Down falls the venerable pile, the abode
Of our forefathers, a grave whisker'd race,
But tasteless. Springs a palace in its stead,
But in a distant spot; where more exposed 770
It may enjoy the advantage of the North
And agueish East, till time shall have transformed
Those naked acres to a sheltering grove.
He speaks. The lake in front becomes a lawn,
Woods vanish, hills subside, and valleys rise, 775
And streams, as if created for his use,

Pursue the track of his directing wand,
Sinuous or straight, now rapid and now slow,
Now murmuring soft, now roaring in cascades,
Even as he bids. The enraptured owner smiles. 780
'Tis finish'd[27]! And yet finish'd as it seems,
Still wants a grace, the loveliest it could show,
A mine to satisfy the enormous cost.
Drain'd to the last poor item of his wealth,
He sighs, departs, and leaves the accomplish'd plan 785
That he has touch'd, retouch'd, many a long day
Labour'd, and many a night pursued in dreams,
Just when it meets his hopes, and proves the heaven
He wanted, for a wealthier to enjoy[28].
And now perhaps the glorious hour is come, 790
When having no stake left, no pledge to endear
Her interests, or that gives her sacred cause
A moment's operation on his love,
He burns with most intense and flagrant zeal
To serve his country. Ministerial grace 795
Deals him out money from the public chest;
Or if that mine be shut, some private purse
Supplies his need with an usurious loan,
To be refunded duly, when his vote[29],
Well-managed, shall have earn'd its worthy price. 800
Oh innocent compared with arts like these,
Crape and cock'd pistol and the whistling ball
Sent through the traveller's temples! He that finds
One drop of heaven's sweet mercy in his cup,
Can dig, beg, rot, and perish well-content, 805
So he may wrap himself in honest rags
At his last gasp; but could not for a world
Fish up his dirty and dependent bread

[27] The pile is finish'd; every toil is past,
And full perfection is arrived at last;
When lo! my Lord to some small corner runs,
And leaves state rooms to strangers and to duns.

[28] The man who builds, and wants therewith to pay,
Provides a home from which to run away.
Young. Satire i.

[29] When men grow great from their revenue spent,
And fly from bailiffs into parliament.
Young. Satire i.

From pools and ditches of the commonwealth,
Sordid and sickening at his own success. 810
  Ambition, avarice, penury incurr'd
By endless riot, vanity, the lust
Of pleasure and variety, dispatch,
As duly as the swallows disappear,
The world of wandering knights and 'squires to town.
London ingulfs them all. The shark is there 816
And the shark's prey; the spendthrift and the leech
That sucks him: there the sycophant and he
That with bare-headed and obsequious bows
Begs a warm office, doom'd to a cold jail 820
And groat *per diem* if his patron frown.
The levee swarms, as if in golden pomp
Were character'd on every statesman's door,
"BATTER'D AND BANKRUPT FORTUNES MENDED HERE."
These are the charms that sully and eclipse 825
The charms of nature. 'Tis the cruel gripe
That lean hard-handed poverty inflicts,
The hope of better things, the chance to win,
The wish to shine, the thirst to be amused,
That at the sound of Winter's hoary wing, 830
Unpeople all our counties, of such herds
Of fluttering, loitering, cringing, begging, loose
And wanton vagrants, as make London, vast
And boundless as it is, a crowded coop.
  Oh thou resort and mart of all the earth, 835
Checquer'd with all complexions of mankind,
And spotted with all crimes; in whom I see
Much that I love, and more that I admire,
And all that I abhor; thou freckled fair
That pleases and yet shocks me, I can laugh 840
And I can weep, can hope, and can despond,
Feel wrath and pity, when I think on thee!
Ten righteous would have saved a city once,
And thou hast many righteous.—Well for thee,—
That salt preserves thee; more corrupted else, 845
And therefore more obnoxious at this hour,
Than Sodom in her day had power to be,
For whom God heard his Abraham plead in vain.

THE TASK.

BOOK IV.

ARGUMENT.

The post comes in. The newspaper is read. The world contemplated at a distance. Address to Winter. The amusements of a rural winter evening compared with the fashionable ones. Address to Evening. A brown study. Fall of snow in the evening. The waggoner. A poor family-piece. The rural thief. Public houses. The multitude of them censured. The farmer's daughter, what she was. What she is. The simplicity of country manners almost lost. Causes of the change. Desertion of the country by the rich. Neglect of magistrates. The militia principally in fault. The new recruit, and his transformation. Reflection on bodies corporate. The love of rural objects natural to all, and never to be totally extinguished.

THE WINTER EVENING.

HARK! 'tis the twanging horn! o'er yonder bridge
That with its wearisome but needful length
Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright;
He comes, the herald of a noisy world. 5
With spatter'd boots, strapp'd waist, and frozen locks,
News from all nations lumbering at his back.
True to his charge the close-pack'd load behind,
Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
Is to conduct it to the destined inn, 10
And having dropp'd the expected bag—pass on.
He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,
Cold and yet cheerful: messenger of grief
Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some,
To him indifferent whether grief or joy. 15
Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,

Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet
With tears that trickled down the writer's cheeks
Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,
Or charged with amorous sighs of absent swains 20
Or nymphs responsive, equally affect
His horse and him, unconscious of them all.
But oh the important budget! usher'd in
With such heart-shaking music, who can say
What are its tidings? Have our troops awaked? 25
Or do they still, as if with opium drugg'd,
Snore to the murmurs of the Atlantic wave?
Is India free? and does she wear her plumed
And jewelled turban with a smile of peace,
Or do we grind her still? The grand debate, 30
The popular harangue, the tart reply,
The logic and the wisdom and the wit
And the loud laugh—I long to know them all;
I burn to set the imprison'd wranglers free,
And give them voice and utterance once again. 35
Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each, 40
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.
Not such his evening, who with shining face
Sweats in the crowded theatre, and squeezed
And bored with elbow-points through both his sides,
Out-scolds the ranting actor on the stage. 45
Nor his, who patient stands till his feet throb
And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath
Of patriots bursting with heroic rage,
Or placemen, all tranquillity and smiles.
This folio of four pages, happy work! 50
Which not even critics criticise, that holds
Inquisitive attention while I read
Fast bound in chains of silence, which the fair,
Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to break,
What is it but a map of busy life, 55
Its fluctuations and its vast concerns?
Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge

That tempts ambition[1]. On the summit, see,
The seals of office glitter in his eyes;
He climbs, he pants, he grasps them. At his heels, 60
Close at his heels a demagogue ascends[2],
And with a dexterous jerk soon twists him down
And wins them, but to lose them in his turn
Here rills of oily eloquence in soft
Mæanders lubricate the course they take; 65
The modest speaker is ashamed and grieved
To engross a moment's notice, and yet begs,
Begs a propitious ear for his poor thoughts,
However trivial all that he conceives.
Sweet bashfulness! it claims, at least, this praise, 70
The dearth of information and good sense
That it foretells us, always comes to pass.
Cataracts of declamation thunder here,
There forests of no meaning spread the page
In which all comprehension wanders lost; 75
While fields of pleasantry amuse us there,
With merry descants on a nation's woes.
The rest appears a wilderness of strange
But gay confusion, roses for the cheeks
And lilies for the brows of faded age, 80
Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,
Heaven, earth, and ocean plunder'd of their sweets,
Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,
Sermons and city feasts and favourite airs,
Æthereal journeys, submarine exploits, 85
And Katterfelto with his hair on end
At his own wonders, wondering for his bread.
'Tis pleasant through the loop-holes of retreat[3]
To peep at such a world. To see the stir

1 Ambition this shall tempt to rise,
Then whirl the wretch from high. *Gray. Eton Coll.*

2 When lo! push'd up to power, and crown'd their cares,
In comes another set, and kicketh them down stairs.
Castle of Indolence. Stanza liv.

3 The world is a comedy, and I know no securer box from which to behold it than a safe solitude, and it is easier to feel than to express the pleasure which may be taken in standing aloof and contemplating the reelings of the multitude, the eccentric motions of great men, and how fate recreates itself in their ruin.—*Sir G. Mackenzie's Moral Essays*, 139.

Of the great Babel and not feel the crowd. 90
To hear the roar[4] she sends through all her gates
At a safe distance, where the dying sound
Falls a soft murmur on the uninjured ear.
Thus sitting and surveying thus at ease,
The globe and its concerns, I seem advanced 95
To some secure and more than mortal height,
That liberates and exempts me from them all.
It turns submitted to my view, turns round
With all its generations; I behold
The tumult and am still. The sound of war 100
Has lost its terrors ere it reaches me,
Grieves but alarms me not. I mourn the pride
And avarice that make man a wolf to man[5],
Hear the faint echo of those brazen throats[6]
By which he speaks the language of his heart, 105
And sigh, but never tremble at the sound.
He travels and expatiates, as the bee
From flower to flower, so he from land to land;
The manners, customs, policy of all
Pay contribution to the store he gleans; 110
He sucks intelligence in every clime,
And spreads the honey of his deep research
At his return, a rich repast for me.
He travels[7], and I too. I tread his deck,

[4] There from the ways of men laid safe ashore,
We smile to hear the distant tempest roar.
Young. Satire v.
While he, from all the stormy passions free
That restless men involve, hears, and but hears,
At distance safe, the human tempest roar,
Wrapt safe in conscious peace. The fall of kings,
The rage of nations, and the crush of states,
Move not the man, who, from the world escaped,
In still retreats, and flowery solitudes,
To nature's voice attends. *Autumn*, 1303.

[5] *Lupus est homo homini.* Plautus.

[6] The brazen throat of war had ceased to roar.
Par. Lost, xi. 713.

[7] Sometimes in distant climes I stray,
By guides experienced taught the way;
The wonders of each region view
From frozen Lapland to Peru,
Bound o'er rough seas and mountains bare,
Yet ne'er forsake my elbow chair. *Soame Jenyns.*

Ascend his topmast, through his peering eyes 115
Discover countries, with a kindred heart
Suffer his woes and share in his escapes,
While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
Runs the great circuit, and is still at home.
  Oh Winter! ruler of the inverted year, 120
Thy scatter'd hair with sleet like ashes fill'd,
Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks
Fringed with a beard made white with other snows
Than those of age; thy forehead wrapt in clouds,
A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne 125
A sliding car indebted to no wheels,
But urged by storms along its slippery way;
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,
And dreaded as thou art. Thou hold'st the sun
A prisoner in the yet undawning East, 130
Shortening his journey between morn and noon,
And hurrying him impatient of his stay
Down to the rosy West. But kindly still
Compensating his loss with added hours
Of social converse and instructive ease, 135
And gathering at short notice in one group
The family dispersed, and fixing thought
Not less dispersed by daylight and its cares.
I crown thee King of intimate delights,
Fire-side enjoyments, home-born happiness, 140
And all the comforts that the lowly roof
Of undisturb'd retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted evening know.
No rattling wheels stop short before these gates,
No powder'd pert proficient in the art 145
Of sounding an alarm, assaults these doors
Till the street rings. No stationary steeds
Cough their own knell, while heedless of the sound
The silent circle fan themselves, and quake.
But here the needle plies its busy task, 150
The pattern grows, the well-depicted flower
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn
Unfolds its bosom, buds and leaves and sprigs
And curling tendrils, gracefully disposed,
Follow the nimble finger of the fair, 155

A wreath that cannot fade, of flowers that blow
With most success when all besides decay.
The poet's or historian's page, by one
Made vocal for the amusement of the rest;
The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds 160
The touch of many a trembling chord shakes out;
And the clear voice symphonious, yet distinct,
And in the charming strife triumphant still,
Beguile the night, and set a keener edge
On female industry; the threaded steel 165
Flies swiftly, and unfelt the task proceeds.
The volume closed, the customary rites
Of the last meal commence. A Roman meal,
Such as the mistress of the world once found
Delicious, when her patriots of high note, 170
Perhaps by moonlight, at their humble doors,
And under an old oak's domestic shade,
Enjoyed, spare feast! a radish and an egg.
Discourse ensues, not trivial[8], yet not dull,
Nor such as with a frown forbids the play 175
Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth.
Nor do we madly, like an impious world,
Who deem religion frenzy, and the God
That made them an intruder on their joys,
Start at his aweful name, or deem his praise 180
A jarring note: themes of a graver tone
Exciting oft our gratitude and love,
While we retrace with memory's pointing wand
That calls the past to our exact review,
The dangers we have 'scaped, the broken snare, 185
The disappointed foe, deliverance found
Unlook'd for, life preserved and peace restored,
Fruits of omnipotent eternal love.

[8] First of your kind! society divine!
Still visit thus my nights, for you reserved,
And mount my soaring soul to thoughts like yours.
Silence, thou lovely power! the door be thine,
See on the hallow'd hour that none intrude,
Save a few chosen friends, who sometimes deign
To bless my humble roof, with sense refined,
Learning digested well, exalted faith,
Unstudied wit, and humour ever gay. *Winter*, 540.

Oh evenings[9] worthy of the Gods! exclaim'd
The Sabine bard. Oh evenings, I reply, 190
More to be prized and coveted than yours,
As more illumined and with nobler truths,
That I and mine and those we love, enjoy.
Is Winter hideous in a garb like this?
Needs he the tragic fur, the smoke of lamps, 195
The pent-up breath of an unsavoury throng,
To thaw him into feeling, or the smart
And snappish dialogue that flippant wits
Call comedy, to prompt him with a smile?
The self-complacent actor when he views 200
(Stealing a sidelong glance at a full house,)
The slope of faces from the floor to the roof,
(As if one master-spring controll'd them all,)
Relax'd into an universal grin,
Sees not a countenance there that speaks a joy 205
Half so refined or so sincere as ours.
Cards were superfluous here[10], with all the tricks
That idleness has ever yet contrived
To fill the void of an unfurnish'd brain,
To palliate dullness and give time a shove. 210
Time as he passes us, has a dove's wing,
Unsoiled and swift and of a silken sound.
But the world's time, is Time in masquerade.
Theirs, should I paint him, has his pinions fledged
With motley plumes, and where the peacock shows 215
His azure eyes, is tinctured black and red
With spots quadrangular of diamond form,
Ensanguined hearts, clubs typical of strife,
And spades, the emblem of untimely graves.
What should be, and what was an hour-glass once 220
Becomes a dice-box, and a billiard mast
Well does the work of his destructive scythe.

[9] Thus in some deep retirement would I pass
The winter glooms, with friends of pliant soul,
Or blithe, or solemn, as the theme inspired.
Winter, 571.

[10] And cards are dealt, and chess boards brought
To ease the pain of coward thought;
Happy result of human wit!
That Alma may herself forget. *Prior.*

Thus deck'd he charms a world whom fashion blinds
To his true worth, most pleased when idle most,
Whose only happy are their wasted hours. 225
Even misses, at whose age their mothers wore
The back-string and the bib, assume the dress
Of womanhood, sit pupils in the school
Of card-devoted time, and night by night
Placed at some vacant corner of the board, 230
Learn every trick, and soon play all the game.
But truce with censure. Roving as I rove,
Where shall I find an end, or how proceed?
As he that travels far, oft turns aside[11]
To view some rugged rock or mouldering tower, 235
Which seen delights him not; then coming home,
Describes and prints it, that the world may know
How far he went for what was nothing worth[12];
So I with brush in hand and pallet spread
With colours mixt for a far different use, 240
Paint cards and dolls, and every idle thing
That fancy finds in her excursive flights.
Come evening once again[13], season of peace,
Return sweet evening, and continue long!
Methinks I see thee in the streaky west, 245
With matron-step slow-moving, while the night
Treads on thy sweeping train; one hand employ'd
In letting fall the curtain of repose[14]

[11] The want of method pray excuse,
Allowing for a vapoured Muse;
Nor to a narrow path confined,
Hedge in by rules a roving mind. *Spleen*, p. 2.

[12] To show the world how Garrick did not act.
Book vi. 677.

[13] Come, pensive nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain
Flowing with majestic train;
And sable stole of Cyprus lawn
Over thy decent shoulders drawn,
Come, but keep thy wonted state
With even step, and pensive gait. *H. Pers.* 31.

[14] Now came still evening on, and twilight grey
Had in her sober livery all things clad;
Silence accompanied, for beast and bird,

On bird and beast, the other charged for man
With sweet oblivion of the cares of day; 250
Not sumptuously adorn'd, nor needing aid
Like homely-featured night, of clustering gems,
A star or two just twinkling on thy brow
Suffices thee; save that the moon is thine
No less than hers, not worn indeed on high 255
With ostentatious pageantry, but set
With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,
Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.
Come then, and thou shalt find thy votary calm,
Or make me so. Composure is thy gift. 260
And whether I devote thy gentle hours
To books, to music, or the poet's toil,
To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit;
Or twining silken threads round ivory reels
When they command whom man was born to please[15],
I slight thee not, but make thee welcome still. 266
Just when our drawing-rooms begin to blaze
With lights by clear reflection multiplied
From many a mirror, in which he of Gath,
Goliath, might have seen his giant bulk 270
Whole without stooping, towering crest and all,
My pleasures too begin. But me perhaps
The glowing hearth may satisfy awhile
With faint illumination that uplifts

They to their grassy couch, these to their nests
Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale;
She all night long her amorous descant sung,
Silence was pleased: now glowed the firmament
With living sapphires; Hesperus that led
The starry host, rode brightest, till the moon,
Rising in clouded majesty, at length
Apparent queen, unveil'd her peerless light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.

Par. Lost, iv. 598.

[15] Now, with all due admiration of the whole sex, says that excellent good man Mr. Park, and with undying attachment to *one* who constituted the prime blessing of half *my* life, this excessive tribute seems to be more courteous than correct. If man had been born chiefly to please women, it does not appear likely that he should have been formed first. The toy is rarely constructed before its playmate.

Morning Thoughts and Midnight Musings, p. 31.

The shadow to the ceiling, there by fits 275
Dancing uncouthly to the quivering flame.
Not undelightful[16] is an hour to me
So spent in parlour twilight; such a gloom
Suits well the thoughtful or unthinking mind,
The mind contemplative, with some new theme 280
Pregnant, or indisposed alike to all.
Laugh ye, who boast your more mercurial powers,
That never feel a stupor, know no pause
Nor need one. I am conscious, and confess
Fearless, a soul that does not always think. 285
Me oft has fancy ludicrous and wild
Sooth'd with a waking dream of houses, towers,
Trees, churches, and strange visages express'd
In the red cinders, while with poring eye
I gazed, myself creating what I saw. 290
Nor less amused have I quiescent watch'd
The sooty films that play upon the bars
Pendulous, and foreboding in the view
Of superstition prophesying still
Though still deceived, some stranger's near approach.
'Tis thus the understanding takes repose 295
In indolent vacuity of thought,
And sleeps and is refresh'd. Meanwhile the face[17]
Conceals the mood lethargic with a mask
Of deep deliberation, as the man 300
Were task'd to his full strength, absorb'd and lost.
Thus oft reclined at ease, I lose an hour
At evening, till at length the freezing blast
That sweeps the bolted shutter[18], summons home
The recollected powers, and snapping short 305
The glassy threads with which the fancy weaves

[16] Not undelightful is the ceaseless hum
To him who muses through the woods at noon.
Summer, 280.

[17] What's the bent brow, or neck in thought reclined?
The body's wisdom to conceal the mind.
Thus pedlers with some hero's head make bold,
Illustrious mark!—where pins are to be sold.
Young. Satire ii.

[18] That no rough blast may sweep
His garlands from the boughs. Book ii. 441.

Her brittle toys, restores me to myself.
How calm is my recess! and how the frost
Raging abroad, and the rough wind, endear
The silence and the warmth enjoy'd within[19]! 310
I saw the woods and fields at close of day
A variegated show; the meadows green
Though faded, and the lands where lately waved
The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,
Upturn'd so lately by the forceful share. 315
I saw far off the weedy fallows smile
With verdure not unprofitable, grazed
By flocks fast feeding, and selecting each
His favourite herb; while all the leafless groves
That skirt the horizon wore a sable hue, 320
Scarce noticed in the kindred dusk of eve.
To-morrow brings a change, a total change!
Which even now, though silently perform'd
And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face
Of universal nature undergoes. 325
Fast falls a fleecy shower[20]. The downy flakes
Descending and with never-ceasing lapse
Softly alighting upon all below,
Assimilate all objects. Earth receives
Gladly the thickening mantle, and the green 330
And tender blade that fear'd the chilling blast,
Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil.
In such a world, so thorny, and where none

[19] *Suave, mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis,*
E terrâ magnum alterius spectare laborem.
Lucret. ii. 1.

[20] Through the hushed air the whitening shower descends
At first thin wavering; till at last the flakes
Fall broad, and wide, and fast, dimming the day
With a continual flow. The cherish'd fields
Put on their winter robe of purest white:
'Tis brightness all; save where the new snow melts
Along the mazy current. Low the woods
Bow their hoar head; and ere the languid sun
Faint from the west emits his evening ray,
Earth's universal face, deep-hid and chill,
Is one wild dazzling waste, that buries wide
The works of man. *Winter*, 229.

Finds happiness unblighted[21], or if found,
Without some thistly sorrow at its side, 335
It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin
Against the law of love to measure lots
With less distinguish'd than ourselves, that thus
We may with patience bear our moderate ills,
And sympathize with others, suffering more. 340
Ill fares the traveller now, and he that stalks
In ponderous boots beside his reeking team.
The wain goes heavily, impeded sore
By congregated loads adhering close
To the clogg'd wheels; and in its sluggish pace 345
Noiseless appears a moving hill of snow.
The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide,
While every breath by respiration strong
Forced downward, is consolidated soon
Upon their jutting chests. He, form'd to bear 350
The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,
With half-shut eyes and pucker'd cheeks, and teeth
Presented bare against the storm, plods on.
One hand secures his hat, save when with both
He brandishes his pliant length of whip, 355
Resounding oft, and never heard in vain.
Oh happy! and in my account, denied
That sensibility of pain with which
Refinement is endued, thrice happy thou.
Thy frame robust and hardy, feels indeed 360
The piercing cold, but feels it unimpair'd.
The learned finger never need explore
Thy vigorous pulse; and the unhealthful East,
That breathes the spleen, and searches every bone
Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee. 365
Thy days roll on exempt from household care;
Thy waggon is thy wife; and the poor beasts,

[21] In the centre of a world whose soil
Is rank with all unkindness, compassed round
With such memorials, I have sometimes felt
That 'twas no momentary happiness
To have *one* enclosure where the voice that speaks
In envy or detraction is not heard.

Excursion, p. 279.

That drag the dull companion to and fro,
Thine helpless charge, dependent on thy care.
Ah treat them kindly! rude as thou appear'st 370
Yet show that thou hast mercy, which the great
With needless hurry whirl'd from place to place,
Humane as they would seem, not always show.
  Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat,
Such claim compassion in a night like this, 375
And have a friend in every feeling heart.
Warm'd while it lasts, by labour, all day long
They brave the season, and yet find at eve
Ill clad and fed, but sparely time to cool.
The frugal housewife trembles when she lights 380
Her scanty stock of brush-wood, blazing clear
But dying soon, like all terrestrial joys.
The few small embers left she nurses well,
And while her infant race with outspread hands
And crowded knees sit cowering o'er the sparks, 385
Retires, content to quake, so they be warm'd.
The man feels least, as more inured than she
To winter, and the current in his veins
More briskly moved by his severer toil;
Yet he too finds his own distress in theirs. 390
The taper soon extinguished, which I saw
Dangled along at the cold fingers' end
Just when the day declined, and the brown loaf
Lodged on the shelf half-eaten without sauce
Of savoury cheese, or butter costlier still, 395
Sleep seems their only refuge. For alas!
Where penury is felt the thought is chain'd,
And sweet colloquial pleasures are but few.
With all this thrift they thrive not. All the care
Ingenious parsimony takes, but just 400
Saves the small inventory, bed and stool,
Skillet and old carved chest, from public sale.
They live, and live without extorted alms
From grudging hands, but other boast have none
To soothe their honest pride that scorns to beg, 405
Nor comfort else, but in their mutual love.
I praise you much, ye meek and patient pair,
For ye are worthy; chusing rather far

A dry but independent crust, hard-earn'd
And eaten with a sigh, than to endure 410
The rugged frowns and insolent rebuffs
Of knaves in office[22], partial in the work
Of distribution; liberal of their aid
To clamorous importunity in rags,
But oft-times deaf to suppliants who would blush 415
To wear a tatter'd garb however coarse,
Whom famine cannot reconcile to filth;
These ask with painful shyness, and refused
Because deserving, silently retire.
But be ye of good courage. Time itself 420
Shall much befriend you. Time shall give increase,
And all your numerous progeny well train'd,
But helpless, in few years shall find their hands
And labour too. Meanwhile ye shall not want
What conscious of your virtues we can spare, 425
Nor what a wealthier than ourselves may send.
I mean the man, who, when the distant poor
Need help, denies them nothing but his name[23].
But poverty with most who whimper forth
Their long complaints, is self-inflicted woe, 430
The effect of laziness or sottish waste.
Now goes the nightly thief prowling abroad
For plunder; much solicitous how best
He may compensate for a day of sloth,
By works of darkness and nocturnal wrong. 435
Woe to the gardener's pale, the farmer's hedge
Plash'd neatly, and secured with driven stakes
Deep in the loamy bank! Uptorn by strength

[22] The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes.
Hamlet, iii. 1.

[23] Let humble Allen, with an awkward shame,
Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame.
Pope. Epist. to Sat.

Grand reservoirs of public happiness
Through secret streams diffusively they bless;
And while their bounties glide conceal'd from view,
Relieve our wants, and spare our blushes too.
Young. Satire vi.

Mr. Smith was the secret benefactor here alluded to.

Resistless in so bad a cause, but lame
To better deeds, he bundles up the spoil 440
An ass's burthen, and when laden most
And heaviest, light of foot steals fast away.
Nor does the boarded hovel better guard
The well-stack'd pile of riven logs and roots
From his pernicious force. Nor will he leave 445
Unwrench'd the door however well secured,
Where chanticleer amidst his harem sleeps
In unsuspecting pomp. Twitched from the perch
He gives the princely bird with all his wives
To his voracious bag, struggling in vain, 450
And loudly wondering at the sudden change.
Nor this to feed his own. 'Twere some excuse
Did pity of their sufferings warp aside
His principle, and tempt him into sin
For their support, so destitute. But they 455
Neglected pine at home, themselves, as more
Exposed than others, with less scruple made
His victims, robb'd of their defenceless all.
Cruel is all he does. 'Tis quenchless thirst
Of ruinous ebriety that prompts 460
His every action and imbrutes the man.
Oh for a law to noose the villain's neck
Who starves his own! who persecutes the blood
He gave them in his children's veins, and hates
And wrongs the woman he has sworn to love. 465
Pass where we may, through city or through town,
Village or hamlet of this merry land
Though lean and beggar'd, every twentieth pace
Conducts the unguarded nose to such a whiff
Of stale debauch forth issuing from the styes 470
That law has licensed, as makes temperance reel.
There sit involved and lost in curling clouds
Of Indian fume, and guzzling deep, the boor,
The lacquey, and the groom. The craftsman there
Takes a Lethæan leave of all his toil; 475
Smith, cobler, joiner, he that plies the sheers,
And he that kneeds the dough; all loud alike,
All learned, and all drunk. The fiddle screams
Plaintive and piteous, as it wept and wailed

Its wasted tones and harmony unheard. 480
Fierce the dispute whate'er the theme. While she,
Fell Discord, arbitress of such debate,
Perch'd on the sign-post, holds with even hand
Her undecisive scales[24]. In this she lays
A weight of ignorance, in that, of pride, 485
And smiles delighted with the eternal poise.
Dire is the frequent curse and its twin sound
The cheek-distending oath, not to be praised
As ornamental, musical, polite,
Like those which modern senators employ, 490
Whose oath is rhetoric, and who swear for fame.
Behold the schools in which plebeian minds,
Once simple, are initiated in arts
Which some may practise with politer grace,
But none with readier skill! 'Tis here they learn 495
The road that leads from competence and peace
To indigence and rapine; till at last
Society, grown weary of the load,
Shakes her encumber'd lap, and casts them out.
But censure profits little. Vain the attempt 500
To advertise in verse a public pest,
That, like the filth with which the peasant feeds
His hungry acres, stinks, and is of use.
The excise is fatten'd with the rich result
Of all this riot. And ten thousand casks, 505
For ever dribbling out their base contents,
Touch'd by the Midas finger of the state,
Bleed gold for Ministers to sport away.
Drink and be mad then! 'Tis your country bids.
Gloriously drunk obey the important call; 510
Her cause demands the assistance of your throats,
Ye all can swallow, and she asks no more.
Would I had fallen upon those happier days
That poets celebrate! those golden times
And those Arcadian scenes that Maro sings, 515
And Sydney, warbler of poetic prose.

[24] Chaos umpire sits,
And by decision more embroils the fray.
Par. Lost, ii. 907.

Nymphs were Dianas then, and swains had hearts
That felt their virtues. Innocence it seems,
From courts dismiss'd, found shelter in the groves.
The footsteps of simplicity impress'd 520
Upon the yielding herbage (so they sing,)
Then were not all effaced. Then speech profane
And manners profligate were rarely found,
Observed as prodigies, and soon reclaim'd.
Vain wish! those days were never. Airy dreams 525
Sat for the picture, and the poet's hand
Imparting substance to an empty shade,
Imposed a gay delirium for a truth.
Grant it. I still must envy them an age
That favour'd such a dream, in days like these 530
Impossible, when virtue is so scarce,
That to suppose a scene where she presides
Is tramontane, and stumbles all belief.
No. We are polish'd now. The rural lass,
Whom once her virgin modesty and grace, 535
Her artless manners and her neat attire
So dignified, that she was hardly less
Than the fair shepherdess of old romance,
Is seen no more. The character is lost.
Her head adorn'd with lappets pinn'd aloft 540
And ribands streaming gay, superbly raised
And magnified beyond all human size,
Indebted to some smart wig-weaver's hand
For more than half the tresses it sustains:
Her elbows ruffled, and her tottering form 545
Ill propp'd upon French heels; she might be deemed
(But that the basket dangling on her arm
Interprets her more truly,) of a rank
Too proud for dairy-work or sale of eggs.
Expect her soon with footboy at her heels, 550
No longer blushing for her awkward load,
Her train and her umbrella all her care.
The town has tinged the country. And the stain
Appears a spot upon a vestal's robe,
The worse for what it soils. The fashion runs 555
Down into scenes still rural, but alas!
Scenes rarely graced with rural manners now.

Time was when in the pastoral retreat
The unguarded door was safe. Men did not watch
To invade another's right, or guard their own. 560
Then sleep was undisturb'd by fear, unscared
By drunken howlings; and the chilling tale
Of midnight murder was a wonder heard
With doubtful credit, told to frighten babes.
But farewell now to unsuspicious nights 565
And slumbers unalarm'd. Now ere you sleep
See that your polish'd arms be primed with care,
And drop the night-bolt. Ruffians are abroad;
And the first larum of the cock's shrill throat
May prove a trumpet, summoning your ear 570
To horrid sounds of hostile feet within.
Even daylight has its dangers. And the walk
Through pathless wastes and woods, unconscious once
Of other tenants than melodious birds
Or harmless flocks, is hazardous and bold. 575
Lamented change! to which full many a cause
Inveterate, hopeless of a cure, conspires.
The course of human things from good to ill[25],
From ill to worse, is fatal, never fails.
Increase of power begets increase of wealth, 580
Wealth luxury, and luxury excess;
Excess, the scrofulous and itchy plague
That seizes first the opulent, descends
To the next rank contagious, and in time
Taints downward all the graduated scale 585
Of order, from the chariot to the plough.
The rich, and they that have an arm to check
The licence of the lowest in degree,
Desert their office; and themselves intent
On pleasure, haunt the capital, and thus 590
To all the violence of lawless hands
Resign the scenes their presence might protect.
Authority herself not seldom sleeps,
Though resident, and witness of the wrong.
The plump convivial parson often bears 595
The magisterial sword in vain, and lays

[25] Thus will this latter, as the former world,
Still tend from bad to worse. *Par. Lost*, xii. 105.

His reverence and his worship both to rest
On the same cushion of habitual sloth.
Perhaps timidity restrains his arm;
When he should strike, he trembles, and sets free, 600
Himself enslaved by terror of the band,
The audacious convict whom he dares not bind.
Perhaps, though by profession ghostly pure,
He too may have his vice, and sometimes prove
Less dainty than becomes his grave outside, 605
In lucrative concerns. Examine well
His milk-white hand. The palm is hardly clean,—
But here and there an ugly smutch appears.
Foh! 'twas a bribe that left it. He has touched
Corruption. Whoso seeks an audit here 610
Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fish,
Wildfowl or venison, and his errand speeds.
But faster far and more than all the rest
A noble cause, which none who bears a spark
Of public virtue ever wish'd removed, 615
Works the deplored and mischievous effect.
'Tis universal soldiership has stabb'd
The heart of merit in the meaner class.
Arms, through the vanity and brainless rage
Of those that bear them, in whatever cause, 620
Seem most at variance with all moral good,
And incompatible with serious thought.
The clown, the child of nature, without guile,
Blest with an infant's ignorance of all
But his own simple pleasures, now and then 625
A wrestling match, a foot-race, or a fair,
Is ballotted, and trembles at the news.
Sheepish he doffs his hat, and mumbling swears
A Bible-oath to be whate'er they please,
To do he knows not what. The task perform'd, 630
That instant he becomes the serjeant's care,
His pupil, and his torment, and his jest.
His awkward gait, his introverted toes,
Bent knees, round shoulders, and dejected looks,
Procure him many a curse. By slow degrees, 635
Unapt to learn and formed of stubborn stuff,
He yet by slow degrees puts off himself,

Grows conscious of a change, and likes it well.
He stands erect, his slouch becomes a walk,
He steps right onward, martial in his air, 640
His form and movement ; is as smart above
As meal and larded locks can make him ; wears
His hat or his plumed helmet with a grace,
And his three years of heroship expired,
Returns indignant to the slighted plough. 645
He hates the field in which no fife or drum
Attends him, drives his cattle to a march,
And sighs for the smart comrades he has left.
'Twere well if his exterior change were all,—
But with his clumsy port the wretch has lost 650
His ignorance and harmless manners too.
To swear, to game, to drink, to show at home
By lewdness, idleness, and sabbath-breach,
The great proficiency he made abroad,
To astonish and to grieve his gazing friends, 655
To break some maiden's and his mother's heart,
To be a pest where he was useful once,
Are his sole aim and all his glory now.
Man in society is like a flower
Blown in its native bed. 'Tis there alone 660
His faculties expanded in full bloom
Shine out, there only reach their proper use.
But man associated and leagued with man
By regal warrant, or self-joined by bond
For interest-sake, or swarming into clans 665
Beneath one head for purposes of war,
Like flowers selected from the rest, and bound
And bundled close to fill some crowded vase,
Fades rapidly, and by compression marred
Contracts defilement not to be endured. 670
Hence charter'd boroughs are such public plagues,
And burghers, men immaculate perhaps
In all their private functions, once combined
Become a loathsome body, only fit
For dissolution, hurtful to the main[26]. 675

[26] There is no corporate conscience. Men who act in bodies, it matters not whether large or small, mobs, senates, or cabinets, will without hesita-

Hence merchants, unimpeachable of sin
Against the charities of domestic life,
Incorporated, seem at once to lose
Their nature, and disclaiming all regard
For mercy and the common rights of man, 680
Build factories with blood, conducting trade
At the sword's point, and dying the white robe
Of innocent commercial justice red[27].
Hence too the field of glory, as the world
Misdeems it, dazzled by its bright array, 685
With all the majesty of its thundering pomp,
Enchanting music and immortal wreaths,
Is but a school where thoughtlessness is taught
On principle, where foppery atones
For folly, gallantry for every vice. 690
But slighted as it is, and by the great
Abandon'd, and, which still I more regret,
Infected with the manners and the modes
It knew not once, the country wins me still.
I never framed a wish, or form'd a plan 695
That flatter'd me with hopes of earthly bliss,
But there I laid the scene. There early stray'd
My fancy, ere yet liberty of choice
Had found me, or the hope of being free.
My very dreams were rural, rural too 700
The first-born efforts of my youthful muse,
Sportive and jingling her poetic bells
Ere yet her ear was mistress of their powers.
No bard could please me but whose lyre was tuned
To Nature's praises. Heroes and their feats 705
Fatigued me, never weary of the pipe
Of Tityrus, assembling as he sang
The rustic throng beneath his favourite beech.
Then Milton had indeed a poet's charms.

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tion take their share in measures which if proposed to any one of them as an individual, would make him reply with the Syrian, "Am I dog, that I should do this thing!"—*Southey's Colloquies*, vol. ii. p. 193.

[27] Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No! this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red. *Macbeth*, ii. 2.

New to my taste, his Paradise surpass'd 710
The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue
To speak its excellence ; I danced for joy.
I marvel'd much that at so ripe an age
As twice seven years, his beauties had then first
Engaged my wonder, and admiring still 715
And still admiring, with regret supposed
The joy half lost because not sooner found.
Thee too enamour'd of the life I loved,
Pathetic in its praise, in its pursuit
Determined, and possessing it at last 720
With transports such as favour'd lovers feel,
I studied, prized, and wish'd that I had known,
Ingenious Cowley[28] ! and though now, reclaim'd
By modern lights from an erroneous taste,
I cannot but lament thy splendid wit 725
Entangled in the cobwebs of the schools,
I still revere thee, courtly though retired,
Though stretch'd at ease in Chertsey's silent bowers
Not unemploy'd, and finding rich amends
For a lost world in solitude and verse. 730
'Tis born with all. The love of Nature's works
Is an ingredient in the compound, man,
Infused at the creation of the kind.
And though the Almighty Maker has throughout
Discriminated each from each, by strokes 735
And touches of his hand with so much art
Diversified, that two were never found
Twins at all points,—yet this obtains in all,
That all discern a beauty in his works
And all can taste them. Minds that have been form'd
And tutor'd, with a relish more exact, 741
But none without some relish, none unmoved.
It is a flame that dies not even there
Where nothing feeds it. Neither business, crowds,
Nor habits of luxurious city life, 745

[28] I seem through consecrated walks to rove,
I hear soft music die along the grove ;
Here his first lays majestic Denham sung,
There the last numbers flowed from Cowley's tongue
Pope. Windsor Forest.

Whatever else they smother of true worth
In human bosoms, quench it or abate.
The villas with which London stands begirt
Like a swarth Indian with his belt of beads,
Prove it. A breath of unadulterate air, 750
The glimpse of green pasture, how they cheer
The citizen, and brace his languid frame!
Even in the stifling bosom of the town,
A garden in which nothing thrives, has charms
That soothe the rich possessor; much consoled 755
That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint,
Of nightshade or valerian, grace the well
He cultivates. These serve him with a hint
That nature lives, that sight-refreshing green
Is still the livery she delights to wear, 760
Though sickly samples of the exuberant whole.
What are the casements lined with creeping herbs,
The prouder sashes fronted with a range
Of orange, myrtle, or the fragrant weed
The Frenchman's darling[29]? are they not all proofs 765
That man immured in cities, still retains
His inborn inextinguishable thirst
Of rural scenes, compensating his loss
By supplemental shifts, the best he may?
The most unfurnished with the means of life, 770
And they that never pass their brick-wall bounds
To range the fields and treat their lungs with air,
Yet feel the burning instinct; over head
Suspend their crazy boxes planted thick
And water'd duly. There the pitcher stands 775
A fragment, and the spoutless tea-pot there;
Sad witnesses how close-pent man regrets
The country, with what ardour he contrives
A peep at nature, when he can no more.
Hail, therefore, patroness of health and ease 780
And contemplation, heart-consoling joys
And harmless pleasures, in the throng'd abode
Of multitudes unknown, hail rural life!
Address himself who will to the pursuit
Of honours, or emolument or fame, 785

[29] Mignonette.

I shall not add myself to such a chace,
Thwart his attempts, or envy his success.
Some must be great. Great offices will have
Great talents. And God gives to every man
The virtue, temper, understanding, taste, 790
That lifts him into life, and lets him fall
Just in the niche he was ordain'd to fill.
To the deliverer of an injured land
He gives a tongue to enlarge upon, an heart
To feel, and courage to redress her wrongs; 795
To monarchs dignity, to judges sense,
To artists ingenuity and skill;
To me an unambitious mind, content
In the low vale of life, that early felt
A wish for ease and leisure, and ere long 800
Found here that leisure and that ease I wish'd.

THE TASK.

BOOK V.

ARGUMENT.

A frosty morning. The foddering of cattle. The woodman and his dog. The poultry. Whimsical effects of frost at a waterfall. The Empress of Russia's palace of ice. Amusements of monarchs. War one of them. Wars, whence. And whence monarchy. The evils of it. English and French loyalty contrasted. The Bastile, and a prisoner there. Liberty the chief recommendation of this country. Modern patriotism questionable, and why. The perishable nature of the best human institutions. Spiritual liberty not perishable. The slavish state of man by nature. Deliver him, Deist, if you can. Grace must do it. The respective merits of patriots and martyrs stated. Their different treatment. Happy freedom of the man whom grace makes free. His relish of the works of God. Address to the Creator.

THE WINTER MORNING WALK.

'Tis morning; and the sun with ruddy orb
Ascending fires the horizon: while the clouds
That crowd away before the driving wind,
More ardent as the disk emerges more,
Resemble most some city in a blaze, 5
Seen through the leafless wood. His slanting ray
Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale[1],
And tinging all with his own rosy hue,
From every herb and every spiry blade
Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field. 10
Mine, spindling into longitude immense,
In spite of gravity and sage remark
That I myself am but a fleeting shade,

[1] The glow-worm shews the matin to be near,
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire. *Hamlet*, i. 5.

Provokes me to a smile. With eye askance
I view the muscular proportioned limb 15
Transformed to a lean shank. The shapeless pair,
As they designed to mock me, at my side
Take step for step, and as I near approach
The cottage, walk along the plaster'd wall,
Preposterous sight! the legs without the man. 20
The verdure of the plain lies buried deep
Beneath the dazzling deluge; and the bents
And coarser grass upspearing o'er the rest,
Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine
Conspicuous, and in bright apparel clad 25
And fledged with icy feathers, nod superb.
The cattle mourn in corners where the fence
Screens them, and seem half petrified to sleep
In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait
Their wonted fodder, not like hungering man 30
Fretful if unsupplied, but silent, meek,
And patient of the slow-paced swain's delay.
He from the stack carves out the accustomed load,
Deep plunging and again deep plunging oft
His broad keen knife into the solid mass. 35
Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands,
With such undeviating and even force
He severs it away: no needless care,
Lest storms should overset the leaning pile
Deciduous, or its own unbalanced weight. 40
Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcerned
The cheerful haunts of man, to wield the axe
And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear,
From morn to eve his solitary task.
Shaggy and lean and shrewd, with pointed ears 45
And tail cropp'd short, half lurcher and half cur
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
Now creeps he slow, and now with many a frisk
Wide-scampering snatches up the drifted snow
With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout; 50
Then shakes his powder'd coat and barks for joy.
Heedless of all his pranks the sturdy churl
Moves right toward the mark; nor stops for aught,
But now and then with pressure of his thumb

To adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube 55
That fumes beneath his nose : the trailing cloud
Streams far behind him, scenting all the air.
Now from the roost or from the neighbouring pale,
Where diligent to catch the first faint gleam
Of smiling day, they gossipp'd side by side, 60
Come trooping at the housewife's well-known call
The feather'd tribes domestic. Half on wing
And half on foot, they brush the fleecy flood
Conscious, and fearful of too deep a plunge.
The sparrows peep, and quit the sheltering eaves 65
To seize the fair occasion. Well they eye
The scatter'd grain, and thievishly resolved
To escape the impending famine, often scared
As oft return, a pert voracious kind.
Clean riddance quickly made, one only care 70
Remains to each, the search of sunny nook,
Or shed impervious to the blast. Resign'd
To sad necessity the cock[2] foregoes
His wonted strut, and wading at their head
With well-considered steps, seems to resent 75
His alter'd gait and stateliness retrenched.
How find the myriads that in summer cheer[3]
The hills and vallies with their ceaseless songs
Due sustenance, or where subsist they now ?
Earth yields them nought : the imprison'd worm is safe
Beneath the frozen clod ; all seeds of herbs 81
Lie covered close, and berry-bearing thorns
That feed the thrush, (whatever some suppose,)
Afford the smaller minstrels no supply.
The long protracted rigour of the year 85
Thins all their numerous flocks. In chinks and holes
Ten thousand seek an unmolested end

[2] While the cock to the barn door
Stoutly struts his dames before. *L'Allegro*, 49.

[3] Ilk hopping bird, wee, hapless thing
That in the merry months o' spring
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o'thee ?
Where wilt thou cower thy chitt'ring wing
An' close thy e'e ? *Burns.*

As instinct prompts, self buried ere they die,
The very rooks and daws forsake the fields,
Where neither grub nor root nor earth-nut now 90
Repays their labour more ; and perch'd aloft
By the way-side, or stalking in the path,
Lean pensioners upon the traveller's track,
Pick up their nauseous dole, though sweet to them,
Of voided pulse or half digested grain. 95
The streams are lost amid the splendid blank
O'erwhelming all distinction. On the flood
Indurated and fixt, the snowy weight
Lies undissolved, while silently beneath
And unperceived the current steals away. 100
Not so, where scornful of a check it leaps
The mill-dam, dashes on the restless wheel,
And wantons in the pebbly gulf below.
No frost can bind it there. Its utmost force
Can but arrest the light and smoky mist 105
That in its fall the liquid sheet throws wide.
And see where it has hung the embroidered banks
With forms so various, that no powers of art,
The pencil or the pen, may trace the scene !
Here glittering turrets rise, upbearing high 110
(Fantastic misarrangement,) on the roof
Large growth of what may seem the sparkling trees
And shrubs of fairy land. The chrystal drops
That trickle down the branches, fast congeal'd
Shoot into pillars of pellucid length, 115
And prop the pile they but adorned before.
Here grotto within grotto safe defies
The sun-beam. There emboss'd and fretted wild
The growing wonder takes a thousand shapes
Capricious, in which fancy seeks in vain 120
The likeness of some object seen before.
Thus nature works as if to mock at art[4],

[4] 'Twas nature's will ; who sometimes undertakes,
For the reproof of human vanity,
Art to outstrip in her peculiar walk.
Excursion, p. 263.

The pillar'd vestibule,
Expanding yet precise, the roof

And in defiance of her rival powers;
By these fortuitous and random strokes
Performing such inimitable feats 125
As she with all her rules can never reach.
Less worthy of applause though more admired,
Because a novelty, the work of man,
Imperial mistress of the fur-clad Russ!
Thy most magnificent and mighty freak, 130
The wonder of the north. No forest fell
When thou would'st build; no quarry sent its stores
To enrich thy walls: but thou didst hew the floods,
And make thy marble of the glassy wave.
In such a palace Aristæus found 135
Cyrene, when he bore the plaintive tale
Of his lost bees to her maternal ear.
In such a palace poetry might place
The armoury of Winter, where his troops
The gloomy clouds find weapons, arrowy sleet[5] 140
Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruising hail,
And snow that often blinds the traveller's course,
And wraps him in an unsuspected tomb.
Silently as a dream the fabric rose.
No sound of hammer or of saw was there[6]. 145
Ice upon ice, the well-adjusted parts
Were soon conjoined, nor other cement ask'd
Than water interfused to make them one.
Lamps gracefully disposed and of all hues
Illumined every side. A watery light 150
Gleamed through the clear transparency, that seemed
Another moon new-risen[7], or meteor fallen

Might seem design'd to humble man, when proud
Of his best workmanship by plan and tool.
Wordsworth. Second Sonn. on Staffa.

The sport of nature, aided by blind chance
Rudely to mock the works of toiling man.
Excursion, p. 101.

5 Sharp sleet of arrowy showers. *Par. Reg.* iii. 324.
Iron sleet of arrowy shower. *Gray.*

6 There was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building. 1 *Kings*, vi. 7.

7 As when the sun new risen. *Par. Lost*, i. 594.

From heaven to earth, of lambent flame serene.
So stood the brittle prodigy, though smooth
And slippery the materials, yet frost-bound 155
Firm as a rock. Nor wanted aught within
That royal residence might well befit,
For grandeur or for use. Long wavy wreaths
Of flowers that feared no enemy but warmth,
Blushed on the pannels. Mirror needed none 160
Where all was vitreous, but in order due
Convivial table and commodious seat
(What seemed at least commodious seat,) were there,
Sofa and couch and high-built throne august[8].
The same lubricity was found in all, 165
And all was moist to the warm touch, a scene
Of evanescent glory, once a stream,
And soon to slide into a stream again.
Alas! 'twas but a mortifying stroke
Of undesigned severity, that glanced 170
(Made by a monarch,) on her own estate,
On human grandeur and the courts of kings.
'Twas transient in its nature, as in show
'Twas durable. As worthless as it seemed
Intrinsically precious: to the foot 175
Treacherous and false, it smiled and it was cold.
Great princes have great playthings. Some have played
At hewing mountains into men, and some
At building human wonders mountain-high.
Some have amused the dull sad years of life, 180
Life spent in indolence, and therefore sad,
With schemes of monumental fame, and sought
By pyramids and mausolean pomp,
Short-lived themselves, to immortalize their bones.
Some seek diversion in the tented field, 185
And make the sorrows of mankind their sport.
But war's a game, which were their subjects wise,
Kings should not play at. Nations would do well

[8] See Kircher's description of the Grotto of Antiparos, in Goldsmith's Nat. vol. i. c. 8.

In several places magnificent columns, thrones, altars, and other objects appeared, as if nature had designed to mock the curiosities of art, &c.

To extort their truncheons from the puny hands
Of heroes, whose infirm and baby minds 190
Are gratified with mischief, and who spoil
Because men suffer it, their toy the world.
When Babel was confounded, and the great
Confederacy of projects wild and vain
Was split into diversity of tongues, 195
Then, as a shepherd separates his flock,
These to the upland, to the valley those[9],
God drave asunder and assigned their lot
To all the nations. Ample was the boon
He gave them, in its distribution fair 200
And equal, and he bade them dwell in peace.
Peace was awhile their care. They plough'd and sow'd
And reap'd their plenty without grudge or strife.
But violence can never longer sleep
Than human passions please. In every heart 205
Are sown the sparks that kindle fiery war,
Occasion needs but fan them, and they blaze.
Cain had already shed a brother's blood;
The deluge wash'd it out; but left unquenched
The seeds of murder in the breast of man. 210
Soon, by a righteous judgement, in the line
Of his descending progeny was found
The first artificer of death; the shrewd
Contriver who first sweated at the forge,
And forced the blunt and yet unblooded steel 215
To a keen edge, and made it bright for war.
Him Tubal named, the Vulcan of old times,
The sword and falchion their inventor claim,
And the first smith was the first murderer's son.
His art survived the waters; and ere long 220
When man was multiplied and spread abroad
In tribes and clans, and had begun to call
These meadows and that range of hills his own,
The tasted sweets of property begat
Desire of more; and industry in some 225
To improve and cultivate their just demesne,
Made others covet what they saw so fair.

[9] They to their grassy couch, these to their nests.
Par. Lost, iv. 601.

Thus wars began on earth. These fought for spoil,
And those in self-defence. Savage at first
The onset, and irregular. At length 230
One eminent above the rest, for strength,
For stratagem or courage, or for all,
Was chosen leader. Him they served in war,
And him in peace for sake of warlike deeds
Reverenced no less. Who could with him compare?
Or who so worthy to controul themselves 236
As he whose prowess had subdued their foes?
Thus war affording field for the display
Of virtue, made one chief, whom times of peace[10],
Which have their exigencies too, and call 240
For skill in government, at length made king.
King was a name too proud for man to wear
With modesty and weakness; and the crown,
So dazzling in their eyes who set it on,
Was sure to intoxicate the brows it bound. 245
It is the abject property of most,
That being parcel of the common mass,
And destitute of means to raise themselves,
They sink and settle lower than they need.
They know not what it is to feel within 250
A comprehensive faculty that grasps
Great purposes with ease, that turns and wields,
Almost without an effort, plans too vast
For their conception, which they cannot move.
Conscious of impotence they soon grow drunk 255
With gazing, when they see an able man
Step forth to notice; and besotted thus
Build him a pedestal, and say, Stand there,
And be our admiration and our praise!
They roll themselves before him in the dust, 260
Then most deserving in their own account
When most extravagant in his applause,
As if exalting him they raised themselves.
Thus by degrees self-cheated of their sound
And sober judgement that he is but man, 265

[10] Peace hath her victories
No less renowned than war. *Milton. Sonnet* xvi.

They demi-deify and fume him so
That in due season he forgets it too.
Inflated and astrut with self-conceit
He gulps the windy diet, and ere long
Adopting their mistake, profoundly thinks 270
The world was made in vain if not for him.
Thenceforth they are his cattle: drudges born
To bear his burthens, drawing in his gears
And sweating in his service. His caprice
Becomes the soul that animates them all. 275
He deems a thousand or ten thousand lives
Spent in the purchase of renown for him
An easy reckoning, and they think the same.
Thus kings were first invented, and thus kings
Were burnished[11] into heroes, and became 280
The arbiters of this terraqueous swamp,
Storks among frogs, that have but croak'd and died.
Strange that such folly as lifts bloated man
To eminence fit only for a God,
Should ever drivel out of human lips 285
Even in the cradled weakness of the world!
Still stranger much, that when at length mankind
Had reached the sinewy firmness of their youth,
And could discriminate and argue well
On subjects more mysterious, they were yet 290
Babes in the cause of freedom, and should fear
And quake before the Gods themselves had made.
But above measure strange, that neither proof
Of sad experience, nor examples set
By some whose patriot virtue has prevailed, 295
Can even now, when they are grown mature
In wisdom, and with philosophic deeps
Familiar, serve to emancipate the rest!
Such dupes are men to custom, and so prone
To reverence what is ancient and can plead 300

[11] Pursuit of fame with pedants fills our schools,
And into coxcombs burnishes our fools.
Young. Satire vii.
Some are bewildered in the maze of schools,
And some made coxcombs nature meant but fools.
Pope. Essay on Crit. 26.

A course of long observance for its use,
That even servitude, the worst of ills,
Because deliver'd down from sire to son,
Is kept and guarded as a sacred thing.
But is it fit, or can it bear the shock 305
Of rational discussion, that a man,
Compounded and made up like other men
Of elements tumultuous, in whom lust
And folly in as ample measure meet
As in the bosoms of the slaves he rules, 310
Should be a despot absolute, and boast
Himself the only freeman of his land?
Should when he pleases, and on whom he will,
Wage war, with any or with no pretence
Of provocation given or wrong sustained, 315
And force the beggarly last doit, by means
That his own humour dictates, from the clutch
Of poverty, that thus he may procure
His thousands, weary of penurious life,
A splendid opportunity to die? 320
Say ye, who (with less prudence than of old
Jotham ascribed to his assembled trees
In politic convention,) put your trust
In the shadow of a bramble, and reclined
In fancied peace beneath his dangerous branch, 325
Rejoice in him and celebrate his sway,
Where find ye passive fortitude? Whence springs
Your self-denying zeal that holds it good
To stroke the prickly grievance, and to hang
His thorns with streamers of continual praise? 330
We too are friends to loyalty. We love
The king who loves the law, respects his bounds,
And reigns content within them. Him we serve
Freely and with delight, who leaves us free.
But recollecting still that he is man, 335
We trust him not too far. King though he be,
And king in England too, he may be weak
And vain enough to be ambitious still,
May exercise amiss his proper powers,
Or covet more than freemen choose to grant: 340
Beyond that mark is treason. He is ours,

To administer, to guard, to adorn the state,
But not to warp or change it. We are his,
To serve him nobly in the common cause
True to the death, but not to be his slaves. 345
Mark now the difference, ye that boast your love
Of kings, between your loyalty and ours.
We love the man; the paltry pageant you.
We the chief patron of the commonwealth
You the regardless author of its woes. 350
We for the sake of liberty, a king;
You chains and bondage for a tyrant's sake.
Our love is principle, and has its root
In reason, is judicious, manly, free;
Yours, a blind instinct, crouches to the rod, 355
And licks the foot that treads it in the dust.
Were kingship[12] as true treasure as it seems,
Sterling, and worthy of a wise man's wish,
I would not be a king to be beloved
Causeless, and daub'd with undiscerning praise, 360
Where love is mere attachment to the throne,
Not to the man who fills it as he ought.
Whose freedom is by sufferance, and at will
Of a superior, he is never free.
Who lives, and is not weary of a life 365
Exposed to manacles, deserves them well.
The state that strives for liberty, though foiled
And forced to abandon what she bravely sought,
Deserves at least applause for her attempt,
And pity for her loss. But that's a cause 370
Not often unsuccessful; power usurp'd
Is weakness when opposed; conscious of wrong
'Tis pusillanimous and prone to flight.
But slaves that once conceive the glowing thought
Of freedom, in that hope itself possess 375
All that the contest calls for; spirit, strength,
The scorn of danger, and united hearts
The surest presage of the good they seek[13].

12 If this be kingly, then farewell for me
All kingship, and may I live poor and free. *Tab. Talk.*

13 The author hopes that he shall not be censured for unnecessary warmth upon so interesting a subject. He is aware that it has become

Then shame to manhood, and opprobious more
To France, than all her losses and defeats 380
Old or of later date, by sea or land,
Her house of bondage worse than that of old
Which God avenged on Pharaoh,—the Bastile.
Ye horrid towers, the abode of broken hearts,
Ye dungeons and ye cages of despair, 385
That monarchs have supplied from age to age
With music such as suits their sovereign ears,
The sighs and groans of miserable men!
There's not an English heart that would not leap
To hear that ye were fallen at last, to know 390
That even our enemies, so oft employed
In forging chains for us, themselves were free.
For he that values liberty, confines
His zeal for her predominance within
No narrow bounds; her cause engages him 395
Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man.
There dwell the most forlorn of human kind,
Immured though unaccused, condemn'd untried,
Cruelly spared, and hopeless of escape.
There like the visionary emblem seen 400
By him of Babylon, life stands a stump,
And filletted about with hoops of brass,
Still lives, though all its pleasant boughs are gone.
To count the hour-bell and expect no change;
And ever as the sullen sound is heard, 405
Still to reflect that though a joyless note
To him whose moments all have one dull pace,
Ten thousand rovers in the world at large
Account it music; that it summons some
To theatre or jocund feast or ball; 410
The wearied hireling finds it a release
From labour; and the lover that has chid
Its long delay, feels every welcome stroke
Upon his heart-strings trembling with delight:—
To fly for refuge from distracting thought 415
To such amusements as ingenious woe

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almost fashionable to stigmatize such sentiments as no better than empty declamation. But it is an ill symptom, and peculiar to modern times.

Contrives, hard-shifting and without her tools ;—
To read engraven on the mouldy walls,
In staggering types, his predecessor's tale,
A sad memorial, and subjoin his own :— 420
To turn purveyor to an overgorged
And bloated spider[14], till the pamper'd pest
Is made familiar, watches his approach,
Comes at his call, and serves him for a friend :—
To wear out time in numbering to and fro 425
The studs that thick emboss his iron door,
Then downward and then upward, then aslant
And then alternate, with a sickly hope
By dint of change to give his tasteless task
Some relish, till the sum exactly found 430
In all directions, he begins again :—
Oh comfortless existence! hemm'd around
With woes, which who that suffers, would not kneel
And beg for exile, or the pangs of death?
That man should thus encroach on fellow man[15], 435
Abridge him of his just and native rights,
Eradicate him, tear him from his hold

[14] With spiders I had friendship made,
And watch'd them in their sullen trade, &c.
Byron. Prisoner of Chillon.

[15] And this place our forefathers made for man,
This is the process of our love and wisdom
To each poor brother who offends against us,
Most innocent, perhaps—and what if guilty?
Is this the only cure? Merciful God!
Each pure and natural outlet shrivelled up
By ignorance and parching poverty,
His energies roll back upon his heart,
And stagnate and corrupt; till changed to poison,
They break out on him, like a loathsome plague spot.
Then we call in our pampered mountebanks—
And this is their best cure! uncomforted
And friendless solitude, groaning and tears,
And savage faces, at the clanking hour,
Seen through the steams and vapour of his dungeon,
By the lamp's dismal twilight! so he lies
Circled with evil, till his very soul
Unmoulds its essence, hopelessly deformed
By sights of evermore deformity.
Coleridge. Remorse.

Upon the endearments of domestic life
And social, nip his fruitfulness and use,
And doom him for perhaps an heedless word 440
To barrenness, and solitude and tears,
Moves indignation; makes the name of king,
(Of king whom such prerogative can please,)
As dreadful as the Manichean God,
Adored through fear, strong only to destroy. 445
'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume,
And we are weeds without it. All constraint,
Except what wisdom lays on evil men,
Is evil; hurts the faculties, impedes 450
Their progress in the road of science; blinds
The eyesight of discovery, and begets
In those that suffer it, a sordid mind
Bestial, a meagre intellect, unfit
To be the tenant of man's noble form. 455
Thee therefore still, blame-worthy as thou art,
With all thy loss of empire, and though squeezed
By public exigence till annual food
Fails for the craving hunger of the state,
Thee I account still happy, and the chief 460
Among the nations, seeing thou art free!
My native nook of earth! Thy clime is rude,
Replete with vapours, and disposes much
All hearts to sadness, and none more than mine;
Thine unadulterate manners are less soft 465
And plausible than social life requires,
And thou hast need of discipline and art
To give thee what politer France receives
From Nature's bounty,—that humane address
And sweetness, without which no pleasure is 470
In converse, either starved by cold reserve,
Or flush'd with fierce dispute, a senseless brawl;
Yet being free, I love thee. For the sake
Of that one feature, can be well content,
Disgraced as thou hast been, poor as thou art, 475
To seek no sublunary rest beside.
But once enslaved, farewell! I could endure
Chains no where patiently, and chains at home

Where I am free by birthright, not at all.
Then what were left of roughness in the grain 480
Of British natures, wanting its excuse
That it belongs to freemen, would disgust
And shock me. I should then with double pain
Feel all the rigour of thy fickle clime;
And if I must bewail the blessing lost 485
For which our Hampdens and our Sidneys bled,
I would at least bewail it under skies
Milder, among a people less austere,
In scenes which, having never known me free,
Would not reproach me with the loss I felt. 490
Do I forebode impossible events,
And tremble at vain dreams? Heaven grant I may!
But the age of virtuous politics is past,
And we are deep in that of cold pretence.
Patriots are grown too shrewd to be sincere, 495
And we too wise to trust them. He that takes
Deep in his soft credulity the stamp
Designed by loud declaimers on the part
Of liberty, themselves the slaves of lust,
Incurs derision for his easy faith 500
And lack of knowledge, and with cause enough.
For when was public virtue to be found
Where private was not? Can he love the whole
Who loves no part? he be a nation's friend
Who is in truth the friend of no man there? 505
Can he be strenuous in his country's cause,
Who slights the charities for whose dear sake
That country, if at all, must be beloved?
'Tis therefore, sober and good men are sad
For England's glory, seeing it wax pale 510
And sickly, while her champions wear their hearts
So loose to private duty, that no brain,
Healthful and undisturb'd by factious fumes,
Can dream them trusty to the general weal.
Such were not they of old, whose temper'd blades 515
Dispersed the shackles of usurp'd controul,
And hew'd them link from link. Then Albion's sons
Were sons indeed. They felt a filial heart
Beat high within them at a mother's wrongs,

And shining each in his domestic sphere, 520
Shone brighter still once call'd to public view.
'Tis therefore, many whose sequester'd lot
Forbids their interference, looking on
Anticipate perforce some dire event;
And seeing the old castle of the state, 525
That promised once more firmness, so assail'd
That all its tempest-beaten turrets shake,
Stand motionless expectants of its fall.
All has its date below. The fatal hour
Was register'd in heaven ere time began. 530
We turn to dust, and all our mightiest works
Die too. The deep foundations that we lay,
Time ploughs them up, and not a trace remains.
We build with what we deem eternal rock;
A distant age asks where the fabric stood, 535
And in the dust, sifted and search'd in vain,
The undiscoverable secret sleeps.
  But there is yet a liberty unsung
By poets, and by senators unpraised,
Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the power 540
Of earth and hell confederate take away;
A liberty, which persecution, fraud,
Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind;
Which whoso tastes can be enslaved no more.
'Tis liberty of heart derived from heaven, 545
Bought with His blood who gave it to mankind,
And seal'd with the same token. It is held
By charter, and that charter sanction'd sure
By the unimpeachable and awful oath
And promise of a God. His other gifts 550
All bear the royal stamp that speaks them his,
And are august, but this transcends them all.
His other works, this visible display
Of all-creating energy and might,
Are grand no doubt, and worthy of the Word 555
That finding an interminable space
Unoccupied, has filled the void so well,
And made so sparkling what was dark before.
But these are not his glory. Man, 'tis true,
Smit with the beauty of so fair a scene, 560

Might well suppose the artificer divine
Meant it eternal, had he not himself
Pronounced it transient, glorious as it is,
And still designing a more glorious far,
Doom'd it as insufficient for his praise. 565
These therefore are occasional and pass.
Form'd for the confutation of the fool
Whose lying heart disputes against a God,
That office served, they must be swept away.
Not so the labours of his love. They shine 570
In other heavens than these that we behold,
And fade not. There is paradise that fears
No forfeiture, and of its fruits he sends
Large prelibation oft to saints below.
Of these the first in order, and the pledge 575
And confident assurance of the rest,
Is liberty; a flight into His arms
Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way;
A clear escape from tyrannizing lust,
And full immunity from penal woe. 580
Chains are the portion of revolted man,
Stripes and a dungeon; and his body serves
The triple purpose. In that sickly, foul,
Opprobrious[16] residence, he finds them all.
Propense his heart to idols, he is held 585
In silly dotage on created things,
Careless of their Creator. And that low
And sordid gravitation of his powers
To a vile clod, so draws him with such force
Resistless from the centre he should seek, 590
That he at last forgets it. All his hopes
Tend downward; his ambition is to sink,
To reach a depth[17] profounder still, and still
Profounder, in the fathomless abyss
Of folly, plunging in pursuit of death. 595

[16] For their dwelling place
Accept this dark opprobrious den of shame.
Par. Lost, ii. 57.

[17] In the lowest deep a lower deep
Still threatening to devour me opens wide.
Par. Lost, iv. 76.

But ere he gain the comfortless repose
He seeks, an acquiescence of his soul
In heaven-renouncing exile, he endures—
What does he not? from lusts opposing in vain,
And self-reproaching conscience. He foresees 600
The fatal issue to his health, fame, peace,
Fortune and dignity; the loss of all
That can ennoble man, and make frail life,
Short as it is, supportable. Still worse,
Far worse than all the plagues with which his sins 605
Infect his happiest moments, he forebodes
Ages of hopeless misery; future death,
And death still future: not an hasty stroke
Like that which sends him to the dusty grave,
But unrepealable enduring death. 610
Scripture is still a trumpet to his fears;
What none can prove a forgery, may be true,
What none but bad men wish exploded, must.
That scruple checks him. Riot is not loud
Nor drunk enough to drown it. In the midst 615
Of laughter his compunctions are sincere,
And he abhors the jest by which he shines.
Remorse begets reform. His master-lust
Falls first before his resolute rebuke,
And seems dethroned and vanquish'd. Peace ensues,
But spurious and short-lived, the puny child 621
Of self-congratulating Pride, begot
On fancied Innocence. Again he falls,
And fights again; but finds his best essay
A presage ominous, portending still 625
Its own dishonour by a worse relapse.
Till Nature, unavailing Nature foiled
So oft, and wearied in the vain attempt,
Scoffs at her own performance. Reason now
Takes part with Appetite, and pleads the cause, 630
Perversely, which of late she so condemn'd;
With shallow shifts and old devices, worn
And tatter'd in the service of debauch,
Covering his shame from his offended sight.
"Hath God indeed given appetites to man, 635
And stored the earth so plenteously with means

To gratify the hunger of his wish,
And doth he reprobate and will he damn
The use of his own bounty? making first
So frail a kind, and then enacting laws 640
So strict, that less than perfect must despair[18]?
Falsehood! which whoso but suspects of truth,
Dishonours God, and makes a slave of man.
Do they themselves, who undertake for hire
The teacher's office, and dispense at large 645
Their weekly dole of edifying strains,
Attend to their own music? have they faith
In what with such solemnity of tone
And gesture they propound to our belief?
Nay,—conduct hath the loudest tongue. The voice 650
Is but an instrument on which the priest
May play what tune he pleases. In the deed,
The unequivocal authentic deed,
We find sound argument, we read the heart."
Such reasonings (if that name must needs belong 655
To excuses in which reason has no part,)
Serve to compose a spirit well inclined[19]
To live on terms of amity with vice,
And sin without disturbance. Often urged
(As often as libidinous discourse 660
Exhausted, he resorts to solemn themes
Of theological and grave import,)
They gain at last his unreserved assent;
Till harden'd his heart's temper in the forge
Of lust, and on the anvil of despair, 665
He slights the strokes of conscience. Nothing moves,

[18] His other excellence they'll not dispute,
But mercy sure is his chief attribute.
Shall pleasures of a short duration chain
A lady's soul in everlasting pain?
Will the great Author us poor worms destroy,
For now and then a sip of transient joy?
Poor Satan doubtless will at length be saved,
Though once upon a time he misbehaved.
Young. Satire vi.

Let priests do something for their one in ten,
It is their trade; so far they're honest men, &c.

[19] *Fere libenter homines id quod volunt credunt.* Cæsar.

Or nothing much, his constancy in ill;
Vain tampering has but foster'd his disease,
'Tis desperate, and he sleeps the sleep of death.
Haste now, philosopher, and set him free! 670
Charm the deaf serpent wisely. Make him hear
Of rectitude and fitness; moral truth[20]
How lovely, and the moral sense how sure,
Consulted and obeyed, to guide his steps
Directly to the FIRST AND ONLY FAIR. 675
Spare not in such a cause. Spend all the powers
Of rant and rhapsody in virtue's praise,
Be most sublimely good, verbosely grand,
And with poetic trappings grace thy prose
Till it out-mantle all the pride of verse.— 680
Ah, tinkling cymbal and high-sounding brass
Smitten in vain! such music cannot charm
The eclipse that intercepts truth's heavenly beam,
And chills and darkens a wide-wandering soul.
The still small voice is wanted. He must speak 685
Whose word leaps forth at once to its effect,
Who calls for things that are not, and they come.
Grace makes the slave a freeman. 'Tis a change
That turns to ridicule the turgid speech
And stately tone of moralists, who boast, 690
As if, like him of fabulous renown,
They had indeed ability to smooth
The shag of savage nature, and were each
An Orpheus and omnipotent in song.
But transformation of apostate man 695
From fool to wise, from earthly to divine,
Is work for Him that made him. He alone,
And He by means in philosophic eyes
Trivial and worthy of disdain, achieves
The wonder; humanizing what is brute 700
In the lost kind, extracting from the lips
Of asps their venom, overpowering strength
By weakness, and hostility by love.
Patriots have toiled, and in their country's cause

[20] Abashed the devil stood
And felt how aweful goodness is, and saw
Virtue in her shape how lovely. *Par. Lost*, iv. 846.

Bled nobly[21], and their deeds, as they deserve, 705
Receive proud recompense. We give in charge
Their names to the sweet lyre. The historic Muse,
Proud of the treasure, marches with it down
To latest times; and Sculpture, in her turn,
Gives bond in stone and ever-during brass, 710
To guard them, and to immortalize her trust.
But fairer wreaths are due, though never paid,
To those who posted at the shrine of truth,
Have fallen in her defence. A patriot's blood
Well spent in such a strife may earn indeed, 715
And for a time insure to his loved land
The sweets of liberty and equal laws;
But martyrs[22] struggle for a brighter prize,
And win it with more pain. Their blood is shed
In confirmation of the noblest claim, 720
Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
To walk with God, to be divinely free,
To soar, and to anticipate the skies.
Yet few remember them. They lived unknown
Till persecution dragg'd them into fame 725
And chased them up to heaven. Their ashes flew
—No marble tells us whither. With their names
No bard embalms and sanctifies his song;

[21] Ungrateful country, if thou e'er forget
The sons who for thy civil rights have bled!
How, like a Roman, Sidney bowed his head,
And Russel's milder blood the scaffold wet:
But these had fallen for profitless regret
Had not thy holy church her champions bred,
And claims from her worlds inspirited
The star of liberty to rise. Nor yet
(Grave this within thy heart!) if spiritual things
Be lost, through apathy, or scorn, or fear
Shalt thou thy humbler franchises support
However hardly won, or justly dear;
What came from Heaven, to Heaven by nature clings,
And if dissevered thence its course is short.
Wordsworth. Ecc. Sketches. Sonnet ix. part 3.

[22] Wars, hitherto the only argument
Heroic deem'd;—the better fortitude
Of patience and heroic martyrdom
Unsung. *Par. Lost*, ix. 28.

And history[23], so warm on meaner themes,
Is cold on this. She execrates indeed 730
The tyranny that doom'd them to the fire,
But gives the glorious sufferers little praise[24].
He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside. There's not a chain
That hellish foes confederate for his harm 735
Can wind around him, but he casts it off
With as much ease as Samson his green withes.
He looks abroad into the varied field[25]
Of Nature, and though poor perhaps, compared
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight, 740
Calls the delightful scenery all his own.
His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
And the resplendent rivers: his to enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who with filial confidence inspired 745
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say—my Father made them all.
Are they not his by a peculiar right,
And by an emphasis of interest his,
Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy 750
Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind

[23] Thus fame shall be achieved, renown on earth,
And what most merits fame in silence hid.
Par. Lost, ix. 698.

[24] See Hume.

[25] What though not all
Of mortal offspring can attain the height
Of envied life; though only few possess
Patrician treasures or imperial state;
Yet Nature's care, to all her children just,
With richer treasures and an ampler state
Endows at large whatever happy man
Will deign to use them. His the city' pomp,
The rural honours his. Whate'er adorns
The princely dome, the column, and the arch,
The breathing marbles, and the sculptured gold
Beyond the proud possessor's narrow claim,
His tuneful breast enjoys, &c.
Akenside. Pleas. of Imag. iii. 574.
These Nature's commoners who want a home,
Claim the wide world for their majestic dome.
Young. First Essay to Pope.

With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love
That plann'd, and built, and still upholds a world
So clothed with beauty, for rebellious man?
Yes—ye may fill your garners, ye that reap 755
The loaded soil, and ye may waste much good
In senseless riot; but ye will not find
In feast or in the chase, in song or dance,
A liberty like his, who unimpeach'd
Of usurpation and to no man's wrong, 760
Appropriates nature as his Father's work,
And has a richer use of yours, than ye.
He is indeed a freeman: free by birth
Of no mean city, plann'd or ere the hills
Were built, the fountains open'd, or the sea 765
With all his roaring multitude of waves.
His freedom is the same in every state;
And no condition of this changeful life
So manifold in cares, whose every day
Brings its own evil with it, makes it less. 770
For he has wings that neither sickness, pain,
Nor penury, can cripple or confine.
No nook so narrow but he spreads them there
With ease, and is at large. The oppressor holds
His body bound, but knows not what a range 775
His spirit takes unconscious of a chain,
And that to bind him is a vain attempt
Whom God delights in, and in whom he dwells.
Acquaint thyself with God if thou wouldst taste
His works. Admitted once to his embrace, 780
Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before;
Thine eye shall be instructed, and thine heart
Made pure, shall relish with divine delight
Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.
Brutes graze the mountain-top with faces prone 785
And eyes intent upon the scanty herb
It yields them; or recumbent on its brow,
Ruminate heedless of the scene outspread
Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away
From inland regions to the distant main. 790
Man views it and admires, but rests content
With what he views. The landscape has his praise,

But not its Author[26]. Unconcern'd who form'd
The paradise he sees, he finds it such,
And such well-pleased to find it, asks no more. 795
Not so the mind that has been touch'd from heaven,
And in the school of sacred wisdom taught
To read His wonders, in whose thought the world,
Fair as it is, existed ere it was.
Not for its own sake merely, but for His 800
Much more who fashioned it, he gives it praise;
Praise that from earth resulting as it ought
To earth's acknowledged sovereign, finds at once
Its only just proprietor in Him.
The soul that sees him, or receives sublimed 805
New faculties, or learns at least to employ
More worthily the powers she own'd before;
Discerns in all things, what with stupid gaze[27]
Of ignorance till then she overlook'd,
A ray of heavenly light gilding all forms 810
Terrestrial, in the vast and the minute,
The unambiguous footsteps of the God
Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,
And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds.
Much conversant with heaven, she often holds 815
With those fair ministers of light to man
That fill the skies nightly with silent pomp,
Sweet conference; enquires what strains were they
With which heaven rang, when every star in haste
To gratulate the new-created earth, 820
Sent forth a voice, and all the sons of God
Shouted for joy.—"Tell me, ye shining hosts
That navigate a sea that knows no storms
Beneath a vault unsullied with a cloud[28],
If from your elevation, whence ye view 825
Distinctly scenes invisible to man,

[26] See nature in some partial narrow shape,
And let the Author of the whole escape.
Dunciad, iv. 455.

[27] But wandering oft with brute unconscious gaze,
Man marks not Thee. *Thomson. Hymn* 28.

[28] And lights on lids unsullied with a tear. *Young.*

And systems of whose birth no tidings yet
Have reach'd this nether world[29], ye spy a race
Favour'd as ours, transgressors from the womb
And hasting to a grave, yet doom'd to rise, 830
And to possess a brighter heaven than yours?
As one who long detain'd on foreign shores
Pants to return, and when he sees afar
His country's weather-bleach'd and batter'd rocks
From the green wave emerging, darts an eye 835
Radiant with joy towards the happy land;
So I with animated hopes behold,
And many an aching wish, your beamy fires,
That show like beacons in the blue abyss
Ordain'd to guide the embodied spirit home 840
From toilsome life to never-ending rest.
Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires
That give assurance of their own success,
And that infused from heaven, must thither tend."
So reads he nature whom the lamp of truth 845
Illuminates. Thy lamp, mysterious Word!
Which whoso sees, no longer wanders lost
With intellects bemazed in endless doubt,
But runs the road of wisdom. Thou hast built,
With means that were not till by thee employ'd, 850
Worlds that had never been hadst thou in strength
Been less, or less benevolent than strong.
They are thy witnesses, who speak thy power
And goodness infinite, but speak in ears
That hear not, or receive not their report. 855
In vain thy creatures testify of thee
Till thou proclaim thyself. Theirs is indeed
A teaching voice; but 'tis the praise of thine
That whom it teaches it makes prompt to learn,
And with the boon gives talents for its use. 860
Till Thou art heard, imaginations vain
Possess the heart, and fables false as hell,

[29] Fields of radiance whose unfaded light
Has travelled the profound six thousand years,
Nor yet arrives in sight of mortal things.
Akenside. Pleas, of Imag, i. 204.

Yet deem'd oracular, lure down to death
The uninform'd and heedless souls of men.
We give to Chance, blind Chance, ourselves as blind,
The glory of thy work, which yet appears 866
Perfect and unimpeachable of blame,
Challenging human scrutiny, and proved
Then skilful most when most severely judged.
But Chance is not; or is not where thou reign'st: 870
Thy Providence forbids that fickle power
(If power she be that works but to confound,)
To mix her wild vagaries with thy laws.
Yet thus we dote, refusing while we can
Instruction, and inventing to ourselves 875
Gods such as guilt makes welcome, Gods that sleep,
Or disregard our follies, or that sit
Amused spectators of this bustling stage.
Thee we reject, unable to abide
Thy purity, till pure as thou art pure, 880
Made such by thee, we love thee for that cause
For which we shunn'd and hated thee before.
Then we are free: then liberty like day
Breaks on the soul, and by a flash from heaven
Fires all the faculties with glorious joy. 885
A voice is heard that mortal ears hear not
Till thou hast touch'd them; 'tis the voice of song,
A loud Hosanna sent from all thy works,
Which he that hears it with a shout repeats,
And adds his rapture to the general praise. 890
In that blest moment, Nature throwing wide
Her vale opaque, discloses with a smile
The Author of her beauties, who retired
Behind his own creation, works unseen
By the impure, and hears his power denied. 895
Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
Their only point of rest, eternal Word!
From thee departing, they are lost and rove[30]
At random, without honour, hope, or peace.

[30] With thee conversing, I forget all time.
Par. Lost, iv. 639.

From thee is all that soothes the life of man, 900
His high endeavour, and his glad success,
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.
But oh thou bounteous Giver of all good,
Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown!
Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor, 905
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away.

THE TASK.

BOOK VI.

ARGUMENT.

Bells at a distance. Their effect. A fine noon in winter. A sheltered walk. Meditation better than books. Our familiarity with the course of nature makes it appear less wonderful than it is. The transformation that spring effects in a shrubbery described. A mistake concerning the course of nature corrected. God maintains it by an unremitted act. The amusements fashionable at this hour of the day reproved. Animals happy, a delightful sight. Origin of cruelty to animals. That it is a great crime proved from Scripture. That proof illustrated by a tale. A line drawn between the lawful and the unlawful destruction of them. Their good and useful properties insisted on. Apology for the encomiums bestowed by the author on animals. Instances of man's extravagant praise of man. The groans of the creation shall have an end. A view taken of the restoration of all things. An Invocation and an Invitation of him who shall bring it to pass. The retired man vindicated from the charge of uselessness. Conclusion.

THE WINTER WALK AT NOON.

There is in souls a sympathy with sounds,
And as the mind is pitch'd the ear is pleased
With melting airs or martial, brisk or grave.
Some chord in unison with what we hear
Is touch'd within us, and the heart replies. 5
How soft the music of those village bells
Falling at intervals upon the ear
In cadence sweet! now dying all away,
Now pealing loud again and louder still,
Clear and sonorous as the gale comes on. 10
With easy force it opens all the cells

Where memory slept[1]. Wherever I have heard
A kindred melody, the scene recurs,
And with it all its pleasures and its pains.
Such comprehensive views the spirit takes, 15
That in a few short moments I retrace
(As in a map the voyager his course,)
The windings of my way through many years.
Short as in retrospect the journey seems,
It seem'd not always short; the rugged path 20
And prospect oft so dreary and forlorn
Moved many a sigh at its disheartening length.
Yet feeling present evils, while the past
Faintly impress the mind, or not at all,
How readily we wish time spent revoked, 25
That we might try the ground again, where once
(Through inexperience as we now perceive,)
We miss'd that happiness we might have found.
Some friend is gone, perhaps his son's best friend
A father, whose authority, in show 30
When most severe[2], and mustering all its force
Was but the graver countenance of love;
Whose favour, like the clouds of spring, might lower,
And utter now and then an aweful voice,
But had a blessing in its darkest frown, 35

[1] How sweet the tuneful bells' responsive peal!
As when at opening morn, the fragrant breeze
Breathes on the trembling sense of wan disease,
So piercing to my heart their force I feel.
And hark! with lessening cadence now they fall;
And now along the white and level tide
They fling the melancholy music wide;
Bidding me many a tender thought recall
Of summer days, and those delightful years
When by my native streams, on life's fair prime,
The mournful magic of their mingling chime
First waked my wondering childhood into tears!
But seeming now when all those days are o'er
The sounds of joy, once heard, and heard no more.
Bowles. At Ostend.

[2] In whose look severe,
When angry most he seem'd, and most severe,
What else but favour, grace, and mercy shone?
Par. Lost, x. 1094.

Threatening at once and nourishing the plant.
We loved, but not enough the gentle hand
That rear'd us. At a thoughtless age allured
By every gilded folly, we renounced
His sheltering side, and wilfully forewent 40
That converse which we now in vain regret.
How gladly would the man recall to life
The boy's neglected sire! a mother too,
That softer friend, perhaps more gladly still,
Might he demand them at the gates of death. 45
Sorrow has since they went subdued and tamed
The playful humour; he could now endure,
(Himself grown sober in the vale of tears,)
And feel a parent's presence no restraint.
But not to understand a treasure's worth[3] 50
Till time has stolen away the slighted good,
Is cause of half the poverty we feel,
And makes the world the wilderness it is.
The few that pray at all pray oft amiss,
And seeking grace to improve the prize they hold 55
Would urge a wiser suit, than asking more.
The night was winter in his roughest mood,
The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon
Upon the southern side of the slant hills,
And where the woods fence off the northern blast, 60
The season smiles, resigning all its rage,
And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue
Without a cloud, and white without a speck
The dazzling splendour of the scene below.
Again the harmony comes o'er the vale, 65
And through the trees I view the embattled tower
Whence all the music. I again perceive
The soothing influence of the wafted strains,
And settle in soft musings as I tread
The walk still verdant under oaks and elms, 70
Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.

[3] Bestow a tear, nor think thy sorrow lost
Another and another should it cost:
The real worth of virtue ne'er is known
Till vanished from before our eyes and gone.
Vincent Bourne.

The roof though moveable through all its length
As the wind sways it, has yet well sufficed,
And intercepting in their silent fall
The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me. 75
No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.
The redbreast warbles still, but is content
With slender notes and more than half suppress'd.
Pleased with his solitude, and flitting light
From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes 80
From many a twig the pendent drops of ice,
That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below.
Stillness acompanied with sounds so soft
Charms more than silence. Meditation here
May think down hours to moments. Here the heart 85
May give an useful lesson to the head,
And learning wiser grow without his books.
Knowledge and wisdom[4], far from being one,
Have ofttimes no connection. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men, 90
Wisdom[5] in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which wisdom builds,

[4] I do not fancy this relative, mendicant, and precarious understanding; for though we could become learned by other men's reading, I am sure a man can never become wise but by his own wisdom.—*Cotton's Montaigne*, i. 24.

No man is the wiser for his learning, it may administer matter to work in, or objects to work upon; but wit and wisdom are born with man.—*Selden's Table Talk.*

The curious hand of knowledge doth but pick
Bare simples. Wisdom pounds them for the sick,
Knowledge, when Wisdom is too weak to guide her,
Is like a headstrong horse that throws the rider.
F. Quarles.

[5] Of unmade happiness
The rude material,—Wisdom add to this
Wisdom, the sole artificer of bliss.
Young. Satire vi.

But knowledge is a food, and needs no less
Her temperance over appetite, to know
In measure what the mind may well contain;
Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns
Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind.
Par. Lost, vii. 126.

Till smooth'd and squared and fitted to its place,
Does but encumber whom it seems to enrich. 95
Knowledge is proud that he has learn'd so much;
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.
Books are not seldom talismans and spells
By which the magic art of shrewder wits
Holds an unthinking multitude enthrall'd. 100
Some to the fascination of a name[6]
Surrender judgement hood-wink'd. Some the style[7]
Infatuates, and through labyrinths and wilds
Of error, leads them by a tune entranced.
While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear 105
The insupportable fatigue of thought,
And swallowing therefore without pause or choice
The total grist unsifted, husks and all.
But trees, and rivulets whose rapid course
Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer, 110
And sheepwalks populous with bleating lambs,
And lanes in which the primrose ere her time
Peeps through the moss that clothes the hawthorn root,
Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and truth,
Not shy as in the world, and to be won 115
By slow solicitation, seize at once
The roving thought, and fix it on themselves.
What prodigies can power divine perform
More grand, than it produces year by year,
And all in sight of inattentive man! 120
Familiar with the effect we slight the cause,
And in the constancy of nature's course,
The regular return of genial months,
And renovation of a faded world,
See nought to wonder at. Should God again, 125

[6] What woeful stuff this madrigal would be
In some starved hackneyed sonneteer or me!
But let a Lord once own the happy lines,
How the wit brightens! how the style refines!
Pope. Essay on Crit. 418.

[7] Others for language all their care express,
And value books, as women men, for dress
Their praise is still—the style is excellent,
The sense they humbly take upon content. *Ib.* 305.
Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire. *Ib.* 340.

As once in Gibeon, interrupt the race
Of the undeviating and punctual sun,
How would the world admire! But speaks it less
An agency divine, to make him know
His moment when to sink and when to rise 130
Age after age, than to arrest his course?
All we behold is miracle, but seen
So duly, all is miracle in vain.
Where now the vital energy that moved,
While summer was, the pure and subtle lymph 135
Through the imperceptible mæandering veins
Of leaf and flower? It sleeps; and the icy touch
Of unprolific winter has impress'd
A cold stagnation on the intestine tide.
But let the months go round, a few short months, 140
And all shall be restored[8]. These naked shoots,
Barren as lances, among which the wind
Makes wintry music, sighing as it goes,
Shall put their graceful foliage on again,
And more aspiring and with ampler spread 145
Shall boast new charms, and more than they have lost.
Then, each in its peculiar honours clad,
Shall publish even to the distant eye
Its family and tribe. Laburnum rich
In streaming gold; syringa ivory pure; 150
The scented and the scentless rose; this red
And of an humbler growth, the other tall[9],
And throwing up into the darkest gloom
Of neighbouring cypress or more sable yew
Her silver globes, light as the foamy surf 155
That the wind severs from the broken wave.
The lilac various in array, now white,
Now sanguine, and her beauteous head now set
With purple spikes pyramidal, as if
Studious of ornament, yet unresolved 160

[8] Yet bear up awhile,
And what your bounded view, which only saw
A little part, deem'd evil is no more;
The storms of wintry time will quickly pass,
And one unbounded Spring encircle all. *Winter.*

[9] The guelder-rose.

Which hue she most approved, she chose them all.
Copious of flowers the woodbine, pale and wan,
But well compensating their sickly looks
With never-cloying odours, early and late.
Hypericum all bloom, so thick a swarm 165
Of flowers like flies clothing her slender rods
That scarce a leaf appears. Mezerion too,
Though leafless, well attired, and thick beset
With blushing wreaths investing every spray.
Althæa with the purple eye; the broom, 170
Yellow and bright as bullion unalloy'd
Her blossoms; and luxuriant above all
The jasmine, throwing wide her elegant sweets,
The deep dark green of whose unvarnish'd leaf
Makes more conspicuous, and illumines more 175
The bright profusion of her scatter'd stars.
These have been, and these shall be in their day;
And all this uniform uncoloured scene
Shall be dismantled of its fleecy load,
And flush into variety again. 180
From dearth to plenty, and from death[10] to life,
Is Nature's progress when she lectures man
In heavenly truth; evincing as she makes
The grand transition[11], that there lives and works
A soul in all things, and that soul is God. 185
The beauties of the wilderness are his,
That make so gay the solitary place
Where no eye sees them. And the fairer forms
That cultivation glories in, are his.
He sets the bright procession on its way, 190
And marshals all the order of the year.
He marks the bounds which winter may not pass,
And blunts his pointed fury. In its case
Russet and rude, folds up the tender germ
Uninjured, with inimitable art, 195
And ere one flowery season fades and dies

[10] The earth, that's nature's mother, is her tomb,
What is her burying place that is her womb.
Romeo.

[11] Builds life on death, on change duration founds.
Pope. 3d Mor. Ess. 167.

Designs the blooming wonders of the next.
  Some say that in the origin of things,
When all creation started into birth,
The infant elements received a law 200
From which they swerve not since. That under force
Of that controling ordinance they move,
And need not his immediate hand, who first
Prescribed their course to regulate it now.
Thus dream they, and contrive to save a God 205
The encumbrance of his own concerns, and spare
The great Artificer of all that moves
The stress of a continual act, the pain
Of unremitted vigilance and care,
As too laborious and severe a task. 210
So man the moth, is not afraid it seems
To span Omnipotence, and measure might
That knows no measure, by the scanty rule
And standard of his own, that is to-day,
And is not ere to-morrow's sun go down. 215
But how should matter occupy a charge
Dull as it is, and satisfy a law
So vast in its demands, unless impell'd
To ceaseless service by a ceaseless force,
And under pressure of some conscious cause? 220
The Lord of all, himself through all diffused,
Sustains and is the life of all that lives.
Nature is but a name for an effect
Whose cause is God. He feeds the secret fire
By which the mighty process is maintain'd, 225
Who sleeps not, is not weary; in whose sight
Slow-circling ages are as transient days;
Whose work is without labour, whose designs
No flaw deforms, no difficulty thwarts,
And whose beneficence no charge exhausts. 230
Him blind antiquity profaned, not served,
With self-taught rites and under various names,
Female and male, Pomona, Pales, Pan,
And Flora and Vertumnus; peopling earth
With tutelary goddesses and gods 235
That were not, and commending as they would
To each some province, garden, field, or grove.

But all are under One. One spirit—His
Who bore the platted thorns with bleeding brows,
Rules universal nature. Not a flower 240
But shows some touch in freckle, streak or stain,
Of his unrivall'd pencil. He inspires
Their balmy odours and imparts their hues,
And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes
In grains as countless as the sea-side sands, 245
The forms with which he sprinkles all the earth.
Happy who walks with him! whom what he finds
Of flavour or of scent in fruit or flower,
Or what he views of beautiful or grand
In Nature, from the broad majestic oak 250
To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,
Prompts with remembrance of a present God.
His presence who made all so fair, perceived,
Makes all still fairer. As with him no scene
Is dreary, so with him all seasons please[12]. 255
Though winter had been none had man been true,
And earth be punished for its tenant's sake,
Yet not in vengeance; as this smiling sky
So soon succeeding such an angry night,
And these dissolving snows[13], and this clear stream 260
Recovering fast its liquid music, prove.
Who then that has a mind well strung and tuned
To contemplation, and within his reach
A scene so friendly to his favourite task,
Would waste attention at the chequer'd board[14], 265
His host of wooden warriors to and fro
Marching and counter-marching, with an eye
As fixt as marble, with a forehead ridged
And furrow'd into storms, and with a hand
Trembling as if eternity were hung 270
In balance on his conduct of a pin[15]?

[12] With thee conversing I forget all time,
All seasons and their change all please alike.
Par. Lost, iv. 637.

[13] Dissolving snows in livid torrents lost. *Spring*, 16.

[14] *Turpe est difficiles habere nugas.* Martial.

[15] Or if he [Alexander] played at chess, what string of his soul was not touched by this idle and childish game! I hate and avoid it because

[illegible]

[illegible] the [illegible]

With all her little ones. [illegible]

Nor envies he aught more their idle sport
Who pant with application misapplied
To trivial toys, and pushing ivory balls
Across the velvet level, feel a joy 275
Akin to rapture, when the bauble finds
Its destined goal of difficult access.
Nor deems he wiser him, who gives his noon
To Miss, the Mercer's plague, from shop to shop
Wandering, and littering with unfolded silks 280
The polished counter, and approving none,
Or promising with smiles to call again.
Nor him, who by his vanity seduced
And soothed into a dream that he discerns
The difference of a Guido from a daub, 285
Frequents the crowded auction. Station'd there
As duly as the Langford of the show,
With glass at eye, and catalogue in hand,
And tongue accomplished in the fulsome cant
And pedantry that coxcombs learn with ease, 290
Oft as the price-deciding hammer falls
He notes it in his book, then raps his box,
Swears 'tis a bargain, rails at his hard fate
That he has let it pass,—but never bids.
Here unmolested, through whatever sign 295
The sun proceeds, I wander. Neither mist
Nor freezing sky, nor sultry, checking me,
Nor stranger intermeddling with my joy.
Even in the spring and play-time of the year
That calls the unwonted villager abroad 300
With all her little ones, a sportive train,
To gather king-cups in the yellow mead,
And prink their hair with daisies, or to pick
A cheap but wholesome sallad from the brook,
These shades are all my own. The timorous hare, 305
Grown so familiar with her frequent guest,
Scarce shuns me; and the stock-dove unalarm'd
Sits cooing in the pine-tree, nor suspends
His long love-ditty for my near approach.

it is not play enough; it is too grave and serious a diversion, and I am ashamed to lay out as much thought and study upon that as would serve to much better uses.—*Montaigne*, (*Cotton's*), i. 50.

Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm 310
That age or injury has hollow'd deep,
Where on his bed of wool and matted leaves
He has outslept the winter, ventures forth
To frisk awhile, and bask in the warm sun,
The squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play. 315
He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,
Ascends the neighbouring beech; there whisks his brush
And perks his ears, and stamps and scolds aloud,
With all the prettiness of feign'd alarm,
And anger insignificantly fierce. 320

The heart is hard in nature, and unfit
For human fellowship, as being void
Of sympathy, and therefore dead alike
To love and friendship both, that is not pleased
With sight of animals enjoying life, 325
Nor feels their happiness augment his own.
The bounding fawn that darts across the glade
When none pursues, through mere delight of heart,
And spirits buoyant with excess of glee;
The horse, as wanton and almost as fleet, 330
That skims the spacious meadow at full speed,
Then stops and snorts, and throwing high his heels
Starts to the voluntary race again;
The very kine that gambol at high noon,
The total herd receiving first from one 335
That leads the dance, a summons to be gay,
Though wild their strange vagaries, and uncouth
Their efforts, yet resolved with one consent
To give such act and utterance as they may
To ecstasy too big to be suppressed;— 340
These, and a thousand images of bliss,
With which kind nature graces every scene
Where cruel man defeats not her design,
Impart to the benevolent, who wish
All that are capable of pleasure pleased, 345
A far superior happiness to theirs,
The comfort of a reasonable joy.

Man scarce had risen, obedient to His call
Who form'd him, from the dust his future grave,
When he was crown'd as never king was since. 350

God set the diadem upon his head,
And angel choirs attended. Wondering stood
The new-made monarch, while before him pass'd,
All happy and all perfect in their kind,
The creatures, summon'd from their various haunts 355
To see their sovereign, and confess his sway.
Vast was his empire, absolute his power,
Or bounded only by a law whose force
'Twas his sublimest privilege to feel
And own, the law of universal love. 360
He ruled with meekness, they obeyed with joy.
No cruel purpose lurk'd within his heart,
And no distrust of his intent in theirs.
So Eden was a scene of harmless sport,
Where kindness on his part who ruled the whole 365
Begat a tranquil confidence in all,
And fear as yet was not, nor cause for fear.
But sin marr'd all; and the revolt of man,
That source of evils not exhausted yet,
Was punish'd with revolt of his from him. 370
Garden of God, how terrible the change
Thy groves and lawns then witness'd! every heart,
Each animal of every name, conceived
A jealousy and an instinctive fear,
And conscious of some danger, either fled 375
Precipitate the loathed abode of man,
Or growl'd defiance in such angry sort,
As taught him too to tremble in his turn.
Thus harmony and family accord
Were driven from Paradise; and in that hour 380
The seeds of cruelty that since have swell'd
To such gigantic and enormous growth,
Were sown in human nature's fruitful soil.
Hence date the persecution and the pain
That man inflicts on all inferior kinds, 385
Regardless of their plaints. To make him sport,
To gratify the frenzy of his wrath,
Or his base gluttony, are causes good
And just in his account, why bird and beast
Should suffer torture, and the streams be dyed 390
With blood of their inhabitants impaled.

Earth groans beneath the burthen of a war
Waged with defenceless innocence, while he,
Not satisfied to prey on all around,
Adds tenfold bitterness to death, by pangs 395
Needless, and first torments ere he devours.
Now happiest they that occupy the scenes
The most remote from his abhorr'd resort,
Whom once as delegate of God on earth
They fear'd, and as his perfect image loved. 400
The wilderness is theirs with all its caves,
Its hollow glens, its thickets, and its plains
Unvisited by man. There they are free,
And howl and roar as likes them, uncontrol'd,
Nor ask his leave to slumber or to play. 405
Woe to the tyrant if he dare intrude
Within the confines of their wild domain;
The Lion tells him—I am monarch here,—
And if he spares him, spares him on the terms
Of royal mercy, and through generous scorn 410
To rend a victim trembling at his foot.
In measure as by force of instinct drawn,
Or by necessity constrain'd, they live
Dependent upon man, those in his fields,
These at his crib, and some beneath his roof; 415
They prove too often at how dear a rate
He sells protection. Witness at his foot
The spaniel dying for some venial fault,
Under dissection of the knotted scourge.
Witness the patient ox, with stripes and yells 420
Driven to the slaughter, goaded as he runs
To madness, while the savage at his heels
Laughs at the frantic sufferer's fury spent
Upon the guiltless passenger o'erthrown.
He too is witness, noblest of the train 425
That wait on man, the flight-performing horse:
With unsuspecting readiness he takes
His murderer on his back, and push'd all day
With bleeding sides and flanks that heave for life
To the far-distant goal, arrives and dies. 430
So little mercy shows who needs so much!
Does law, so jealous in the cause of man,

Denounce no doom on the delinquent? None.
He lives, and o'er his brimming beaker boasts
(As if barbarity were high desert,) 435
The inglorious feat, and clamorous in praise
Of the poor brute, seems wisely to suppose
The honours of his matchless horse his own.
But many a crime deem'd innocent on earth
Is register'd in heaven, and these, no doubt, 440
Have each their record, with a curse annex'd.
Man may dismiss compassion from his heart,
But God will never. When he charged the Jew
To assist his foe's down-fallen beast to rise,
And when the bush-exploring boy that seized 445
The young, to let the parent bird go free,
Proved he not plainly that his meaner works
Are yet his care, and have an interest all,
All, in the universal Father's love?
On Noah, and in him on all mankind 450
The charter was conferr'd by which we hold
The flesh of animals in fee, and claim
O'er all we feed on, power of life and death.
But read the instrument, and mark it well.
The oppression of a tyrannous controul 455
Can find no warrant there. Feed then, and yield
Thanks for thy food. Carnivorous through sin
Feed on the slain, but spare the living brute.
The Governor of all, himself to all
So bountiful, in whose attentive ear 460
The unfledged raven and the lion's whelp
Plead not in vain for pity on the pangs
Of hunger unassuaged, has interposed,
Not seldom, his avenging arm, to smite
The injurious trampler upon nature's law 465
That claims forbearance even for a brute.
He hates the hardness of a Balaam's heart;
And prophet as he was, he might not strike
The blameless animal, without rebuke,
On which he rode: her opportune offence 470
Saved him, or the unrelenting seer had died.
He sees that human equity is slack
To interfere, though in so just a cause,

And makes the task his own; inspiring dumb
And helpless victims with a sense so keen 475
Of injury, with such knowledge of their strength,
And such sagacity to take revenge,
That oft the beast has seem'd to judge the man.
An ancient, not a legendary tale,
By one of sound intelligence rehearsed, 480
(If such, who plead for Providence, may seem
In modern eyes,) shall make the doctrine clear.
Where England stretch'd towards the setting sun
Narrow and long, o'erlooks the western wave,
Dwelt young Misagathus; a scorner he 485
Of God and goodness, atheist in ostent,
Vicious in act, in temper savage-fierce.
He journey'd, and his chance was as he went,
To join a traveller of far different note,
Evander, famed for piety, for years 490
Deserving honour, but for wisdom more.
Fame had not left the venerable man
A stranger to the manners of the youth,
Whose face too was familiar to his view.
Their way was on the margin of the land, 495
O'er the green summit of the rocks whose base
Beats back the roaring surge[16], scarce heard so high.
The charity that warm'd his heart was moved
At sight of the man-monster. With a smile
Gentle, and affable, and full of grace, 500
As fearful of offending whom he wish'd
Much to persuade, he plied his ear with truths
Not harshly thunder'd forth or rudely press'd,
But like his purpose, gracious, kind, and sweet.
And dost thou dream, the impenetrable man 505
Exclaim'd, that me, the lullabies of age
And fantasies of dotards such as thou
Can cheat, or move a moment's fear in me?
Mark now the proof I give thee, that the brave
Need no such aids as superstition lends 510
To steel their hearts against the dread of death!

[16] The murmuring surge,
That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,
Cannot be heard so high. *King Lear*, iv. 6.

He spoke, and to the precipice at hand
Push'd with a madman's fury. Fancy shrinks
And the blood thrills and curdles at the thought
Of such a gulf as he design'd his grave. 515
But though the felon on his back could dare
The dreadful leap, more rational his steed
Declined the death, and wheeling swiftly round
Or ere his hoof had press'd the crumbling verge,
Baffled his rider, saved against his will. 520
The frenzy of the brain may be redress'd
By medicine well applied, but without grace
The heart's insanity admits no cure.
Enraged the more by what might have reform'd
His horrible intent, again he sought 525
Destruction with a zeal to be destroyed,
With sounding whip and rowels dyed in blood.
But still in vain. The providence that meant
A longer date to the far nobler beast,
Spared yet again the ignobler for his sake. 530
And now, his prowess proved, and his sincere
Incurable obduracy evinced,
His rage grew cool; and pleased perhaps to have earn'd
So cheaply the renown of that attempt,
With looks of some complacence he resumed 535
His road, deriding much the blank amaze
Of good Evander, still where he was left
Fixt motionless, and petrified with dread.
So on they fared; discourse on other themes
Ensuing, seem'd to obliterate the past, 540
And tamer far for so much fury shown,
(As is the course of rash and fiery men,)
The rude companion smiled as if transform'd.
But 'twas a transient calm. A storm was near,
An unsuspected storm. His hour was come. 545
The impious challenger of power divine
Was now to learn, that Heaven though slow to wrath,
Is never with impunity defied.
His horse, as he had caught his master's mood,
Snorting, and starting into sudden rage, 550
Unbidden, and not now to be controul'd,
Rush'd to the cliff, and having reach'd it, stood.

At once the shock unseated him. He flew
Sheer o'er the craggy barrier, and immersed
Deep in the flood, found, when he sought it not, 555
The death he had deserved, and died alone.
So God wrought double justice; made the fool
The victim of his own tremendous choice,
And taught a brute the way to safe revenge.
I would not enter on my list of friends 560
(Though graced with polish'd manners and fine sense
Yet wanting sensibility,) the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.
An inadvertent step may crush the snail
That crawls at evening in the public path, 565
But he that has humanity, forewarned,
Will tread aside, and let the reptile live.
The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,
And charged perhaps with venom, that intrudes
A visitor unwelcome into scenes 570
Sacred to neatness and repose, the alcove,
The chamber, or refectory, may die[17].
A necessary act incurs no blame.
Not so when held within their proper bounds
And guiltless of offence, they range the air, 575
Or take their pastime in the spacious field.
There they are privileged; and he that hunts
Or harms them there, is guilty of a wrong,
Disturbs the economy of nature's realm,
Who when she form'd, design'd them an abode. 580
The sum is this: if man's convenience, health,
Or safety interfere, his rights and claims
Are paramount, and must extinguish theirs.
Else they are all—the meanest things that are,
As free to live and to enjoy that life, 585
As God was free to form them at the first,
Who in his sovereign wisdom made them all.

17. Other creature here,
Beast, bird, insect, or worm, durst enter none.
Par. Lost, iv. 703.

Chase from all my bounds
Each thing impure or noxious. Enter in,
O stranger, undismay'd. Nor bat, nor toad
Here lurks. *Akenside. Inscrip. for a Grotto.*

Ye therefore who love mercy, teach your sons
To love it too. The spring-time of our years
Is soon dishonour'd and defiled in most 590
By budding ills, that ask a prudent hand
To check them. But alas! none sooner shoots,
If unrestrain'd, into luxuriant growth,
Than cruelty, most devilish of them all.
Mercy to him that shows it, is the rule 595
And righteous limitation of its act
By which Heaven moves in pardoning guilty man;
And he that shows none, being ripe in years,
And conscious of the outrage he commits,
Shall seek it, and not find it in his turn. 600
Distinguish'd much by reason, and still more
By our capacity of grace divine,
From creatures that exist but for our sake,
Which having served us, perish, we are held
Accountable, and God, some future day, 605
Will reckon with us roundly for the abuse
Of what he deems no mean or trivial trust.
Superior as we are, they yet depend
Not more on human help, than we on theirs.
Their strength, or speed, or vigilance, were given 610
In aid of our defects. In some are found
Such teachable and apprehensive parts,
That man's attainments in his own concerns,
Match'd with the expertness of the brutes in theirs,
Are oft-times vanquish'd and thrown far behind. 615
Some show that nice sagacity of smell,
And read with such discernment in the port
And figure of the man, his secret aim,
That oft we owe our safety to a skill
We could not teach, and must despair to learn[18]. 620
But learn we might, if not too proud to stoop
To quadrupede instructors, many a good
And useful quality, and virtue too,

[18] In their looks
Much reason, and in their actions, oft appears.
Par. Lost, ix. 558.
On sculls that cannot teach and will not learn.
Book ii. 394.

Rarely exemplified among ourselves;
Attachment never to be wean'd, or changed 625
By any change of fortune, proof alike
Against unkindness, absence, and neglect;
Fidelity that neither bribe nor threat
Can move or warp, and gratitude for small
And trivial favours, lasting as the life, 630
And glistening even in the dying eye.
  Man praises man. Desert in arts or arms
Wins public honour; and ten thousand sit
Patiently present at a sacred song,
Commemoration-mad; content to hear 635
(Oh wonderful effect of music's power!)
Messiah's eulogy, for Handel's sake.
But less, methinks, than sacrilege might serve—
(For was it less? What heathen would have dared
To strip Jove's statue of his oaken wreath 640
And hang it up in honour of a man?)
Much less might serve, when all that we design
Is but to gratify an itching ear,
And give the day to a musician's praise.
Remember Handel? who that was not born 645
Deaf as the dead to harmony, forgets,
Or can, the more than Homer of his age?
Yes—we remember him. And while we praise
A talent so divine, remember too
That His most holy book from whom it came 650
Was never meant, was never used before
To buckram out the memory of a man.
But hush!—the muse perhaps is too severe,
And with a gravity beyond the size
And measure of the offence, rebukes a deed 655
Less impious than absurd, and owing more
To want of judgement than to wrong design.
So in the chapel of old Ely House,
When wandering Charles, who meant to be the third,
Had fled from William, and the news was fresh, 660
The simple clerk but loyal, did announce,
And eke did rear right merrily, two staves,
Sung to the praise and glory of King George.
—Man praises man, and Garrick's memory next,

When time hath somewhat mellow'd it, and made 665
The idol of our worship while he lived,
The God of our idolatry once more,
Shall have its altar; and the world shall go
In pilgrimage to bow before his shrine.
The theatre too small, shall suffocate 670
Its squeezed contents, and more than it admits
Shall sigh at their exclusion, and return
Ungratified. For there some noble lord
Shall stuff his shoulders with King Richard's bunch,
Or wrap himself in Hamlet's inky cloak, 675
And strut and storm and straddle, stamp and stare,
To show the world how Garrick did not act[19].
For Garrick was a worshipper himself;
He drew the Liturgy, and framed the rites
And solemn ceremonial of the day, 680
And call'd the world to worship on the banks
Of Avon famed in song. Ah! pleasant proof
That piety has still in human hearts
Some place, a spark or two not yet extinct.
The mulberry tree was hung with blooming wreaths,
The mulberry tree stood centre of the dance, 686
The mulberry tree was hymn'd with dulcet airs,
And from his touchwood trunk the mulberry tree
Supplied such relics as devotion holds
Still sacred, and preserves with pious care. 690
So 'twas an hallow'd time. Decorum reign'd,
And mirth without offence. No few return'd
Doubtless much edified, and all refreshed.
—Man praises man. The rabble all alive,
From tippling benches, cellars, stalls and styes, 695
Swarm in the streets. The statesman of the day,
A pompous and slow-moving pageant comes.
Some shout him, and some hang upon his car
To gaze in his eyes and bless him. Maidens wave

[19] How his eyes languish! how his thoughts adore
That painted coat which Joseph never wore.
Young. Satire iv.
That the world may know
How far he went for what was nothing worth.
Book vi. 238.

Their 'kerchiefs, and old women weep for joy; 700
While others not so satisfied unhorse
The gilded equipage, and turning loose
His steeds, usurp a place they well deserve.
Why? what has charm'd them? Hath he saved the state?
No. Doth he purpose its salvation? No. 705
Enchanting novelty, that moon at full,
That finds out every crevice of the head
That is not sound and perfect, hath in theirs
Wrought this disturbance. But the wane is near,
And his own cattle must suffice him soon. 710
Thus idly do we waste the breath of praise,
And dedicate a tribute, in its use
And just direction sacred, to a thing
Doom'd to the dust, or lodged already there.
Encomium in old time was poets' work, 715
But poets having lavishly long since
Exhausted all materials of the art,
The task now falls into the public hand.
And I, contented with an humble theme,
Have poured my stream of panegyric down 720
The vale of nature, where it creeps and winds
Among her lovely works, with a secure
And unambitious course, reflecting clear
If not the virtues yet the worth of brutes.
And I am recompensed, and deem the toils 725
Of poetry not lost, if verse of mine
May stand between an animal and woe,
And teach one tyrant pity for his drudge.
The groans of nature in this nether world,
Which Heaven has heard for ages, have an end. 730
Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung
Whose fire was kindled at the prophets' lamp,
The time of rest, the promised sabbath comes.
Six thousand years of sorrow have well nigh
Fulfill'd their tardy and disastrous course 735
Over a sinful world. And what remains
Of this tempestuous state of human things,
Is merely as the working of a sea
Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest.
For He whose car the winds are, and the clouds 740

The dust that waits upon his sultry march
When sin hath moved him and his wrath is hot,
Shall visit earth in mercy; shall descend
Propitious, in his chariot paved with love,
And what his storms have blasted and defaced 745
For man's revolt, shall with a smile repair.
Sweet is the harp of prophecy; too sweet
Not to be wrong'd by a mere mortal touch;
Nor can the wonders it records be sung
To meaner music, and not suffer loss. 750
But when a poet, or when one like me,
Happy to rove among poetic flowers,
Though poor in skill to rear them, lights at last
On some fair theme, some theme divinely fair[20],
Such is the impulse and the spur he feels 755
To give it praise proportioned to its worth,
That not to attempt it, arduous as he deems
The labour, were a task more arduous still.
Oh scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,
Scenes of accomplish'd bliss! which who can see 760
Though but in distant prospect, and not feel
His soul refresh'd with foretaste of the joy?
Rivers of gladness water all the earth,
And clothe all climes with beauty; the reproach
Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field[21] 765
Laughs with abundance; and the land once lean,
Or fertile only in its own disgrace,
Exults to see its thistly curse repealed.
The various seasons woven into one,
And that one season an eternal spring, 770
The garden fears no blight, and needs no fence,
For there is none to covet, all are full.
The lion and the libbard and the bear
Graze with the fearless flocks. All bask at noon
Together, or all gambol in the shade 775
Of the same grove, and drink one common stream.
Antipathies are none. No foe to man

20 True she is fair, oh how divinely fair!
Addison. Cato.

21 The folds shall be full of sheep: the valleys also shall stand so thick with corn that they shall laugh and sing.—*Psalm* lxv.

Lurks in the serpent now ; the mother sees
And smiles to see her infant's playful hand
Stretch'd forth to dally with the crested worm, 780
To stroke his azure neck, or to receive
The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.
All creatures worship man, and all mankind
One Lord, one Father. Error has no place ;
That creeping pestilence is driven away, 785
The breath of heaven has chased it. In the heart
No passion touches a discordant string,
But all is harmony and love. Disease
Is not. The pure and uncontaminate blood
Holds its due course, nor fears the frost of age. 790
One song employs all nations, and all cry
"Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us!"
The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
Shout to each other ; and the mountain tops
From distant mountains catch the flying joy, 795
Till nation after nation taught the strain,
Each rolls the rapturous Hosanna round.
Behold the measure of the promise fill'd,
See Salem built, the labour of a God!
Bright as a sun the sacred city shines ; 800
All kingdoms and all princes of the earth
Flock to that light ; the glory of all lands
Flows into her, unbounded is her joy,
And endless her increase. Thy rams are there
Nebaioth, and the flocks of Kedar[22] there ; 805
The looms of Ormus, and the mines of Ind[23],
And Saba's spicy groves pay tribute there.
Praise is in all her gates. Upon her walls,
And in her streets, and in her spacious courts
Is heard salvation. Eastern Java there 810
Kneels with the native of the farthest West,
And Æthiopia spreads abroad the hand

[22] Nebaioth and Kedar, the sons of Ishmael and progenitors of the Arabs, in the prophetic scripture here alluded to, may be reasonably considered as representatives of the Gentiles at large. C.

[23] High on a throne of royal state which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind.
Par. Lost, ii. 2.

And worships. Her report has travell'd forth
Into all lands. From every clime they come
To see thy beauty, and to share thy joy 815
O Sion! an assembly such as earth
Saw never, such as heaven stoops down to see.
Thus heavenward all things tend. For all were once
Perfect, and all must be at length restored.
So God has greatly purposed; who would else 820
In his dishonoured works himself endure
Dishonour, and be wrong'd without redress.
Haste then, and wheel away a shatter'd world,
Ye slow-revolving seasons! We would see
(A sight to which our eyes are strangers yet,) 825
A world that does not dread and hate his laws,
And suffer for its crime: would learn how fair
The creature is that God pronounces good,
How pleasant in itself what pleases him.
Here every drop of honey hides a sting; 830
Worms wind themselves into our sweetest flowers,
And even the joy that haply some poor heart
Derives from heaven, pure as the fountain is,
Is sullied in the stream; taking a taint
From touch of human lips, at best impure. 835
Oh for a world in principle as chaste
As this is gross and selfish! over which
Custom and prejudice shall bear no sway
That govern all things here, shouldering aside
The meek and modest truth, and forcing her 840
To seek a refuge from the tongue of strife
In nooks obscure, far from the ways of men[24].
Where violence shall never lift the sword,
Nor cunning justify the proud man's wrong,
Leaving the poor no remedy but tears. 845
Where he that fills an office, shall esteem
The occasion it presents of doing good
More than the perquisite: where law shall speak
Seldom, and never but as wisdom prompts
And equity; not jealous more to guard 850
A worthless form, than to decide aright

24 From the cheerful ways of men
Cut off. *Par. Lost*, iii. 46.

Where fashion shall not sanctify abuse,
Nor smooth good-breeding (supplemental grace,)
With lean performance ape the work of love.
Come then, and added to thy many crowns 855
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,
Thou who alone art worthy! it was thine
By ancient covenant ere nature's birth,
And thou hast made it thine by purchase since,
And overpaid its value with thy blood. 860
Thy saints proclaim thee King; and in their hearts
Thy title is engraven with a pen
Dipt in the fountain of eternal love.
Thy saints proclaim thee King; and thy delay
Gives courage to their foes, who, could they see 865
The dawn of thy last advent long-desired,
Would creep into the bowels of the hills,
And flee for safety to the falling rocks.
The very spirit of the world is tired
Of its own taunting question ask'd so long, 870
"Where is the promise of your Lord's approach?"
The infidel has shot his bolts away,
Till his exhausted quiver yielding none,
He gleans the blunted shafts that have recoiled,
And aims them at the shield of truth again. 875
The veil is rent, rent too by priestly hands,
That hides divinity from mortal eyes,
And all the mysteries to faith proposed
Insulted and traduced, are cast aside
As useless to the moles and to the bats. 880
They now are deem'd the faithful, and are praised,
Who constant only in rejecting thee,
Deny thy Godhead with a martyr's zeal,
And quit their office for their error's sake.
Blind and in love with darkness! yet even these 885
Worthy, compared with sycophants, who knee
Thy name, adoring, and then preach thee man.
So fares thy church. But how thy church may fare
The world takes little thought; who will may preach,
And what they will. All pastors are alike 890
To wandering sheep, resolved to follow none.
Two gods divide them all, Pleasure and Gain.

For these they live, they sacrifice to these,
And in their service wage perpetual war 894
With conscience and with thee. Lust in their hearts,
And mischief in their hands, they roam the earth
To prey upon each other; stubborn, fierce,
High-minded, foaming out their own disgrace.
Thy prophets speak of such; and noting down
The features of the last degenerate times, 900
Exhibit every lineament of these.
Come then, and added to thy many crowns
Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,
Due to thy last and most effectual work,
Thy word fulfilled, the conquest of a world! 905
He is the happy man, whose life even now
Shows somewhat of that happier life to come;
Who doomed to an obscure but tranquil state
Is pleased with it, and were he free to choose[25],
Would make his fate his choice; whom peace, the fruit
Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith, 911
Prepare for happiness; bespeak him one
Content indeed to sojourn while he must
Below the skies, but having there his home.
The world o'erlooks him in her bushy search 915
Of objects more illustrious in her view;
And occupied as earnestly as she,
Though more sublimely, he o'erlooks the world.
She scorns his pleasures, for she knows them not;
He seeks not hers, for he has proved them vain. 920
He cannot skim the ground like summer birds
Pursuing gilded flies, and such he deems
Her honours, her emoluments, her joys.
Therefore in contemplation is his bliss, 924
Whose power is such, that whom she lifts from earth
She makes familiar with a heaven unseen,
And shows him glories yet to be reveal'd.
Not slothful he, though seeming unemployed,
And censured oft as useless. Stillest[26] streams

[25] He has a heart, as Marvel expresses it, to make his destiny his choice. *Elia*, vol. ii. p. 206.

[26] How seldom do we look through the form and circumstances of affairs nto their real importance; and how much are we led to rate them by the

Oft water fairest meadows, and the bird 930
That flutters least is longest on the wing[27].
Ask him indeed what trophies he has raised,
Or what achievements of immortal fame
He purposes, and he shall answer—none.
His warfare is within. There unfatigued 935
His fervent spirit labours. There he fights,
And there obtains fresh triumphs o'er himself,
And never-withering wreaths, compared with which
The laurels that a Cæsar reaps are weeds[28].
Perhaps the self-approving haughty world, 940
(That as she sweeps him with her whistling silks
Scarce deigns to notice him, or if she see
Deems him a cypher in the works of God,)
Receives advantage from his noiseless hours
Of which she little dreams. Perhaps she owes 945
Her sunshine and her rain, her blooming spring
And plenteous harvest, to the prayer he makes,
When Isaac like, the solitary saint
Walks forth to meditate at eventide,
And think on her, who thinks not for herself. 950
Forgive him then, thou bustler in concerns
Of little worth, and idler in the best,

---

stir and noise with which they are attended! .... But we might reflect that the most perfect and beneficial agency is exerted without precipitation or tumult; that all the planetary revolutions are performed in majestic order and silence, and with less impression upon the senses than the motions of a water mill.—*Rural Philosophy, by Ely Bates.*

[27] Like virtue, thriving most where little seen.

Book iii. 664

Strongest minds
Are often those of whom the noisy world
Hears least. *Excursion*, p. 7.

[28] He deserves the name of a great and good man, who serves God, and is a friend to mankind, and receives the most ungrateful returns from the world, and endures them with a calm and composed mind; who dares look scorn and death and infamy in the face, who can stand forth unmoved and patiently bear to be derided as a fool and an idiot, to be pointed out as a madman and an enthusiast, to be reviled, &c. He who can pass through these trials is a conqueror indeed, and what the world calls courage scarcely deserves that name when compared to this behaviour.

Jortin's Discourses, ii. p. 125.

If author of no mischief and some good,
He seek his proper happiness by means
That may advance, but cannot hinder thine. 955
Nor though he tread the secret path of life
Engage no notice, and enjoy much ease,
Account him an incumbrance on the state,
Receiving benefits, and rendering none.
His sphere though humble, if that humble sphere 960
Shine with his fair example, and though small
His influence, if that influence all be spent
In soothing sorrow and in quenching strife,
In aiding helpless indigence, in works
From which at least a grateful few derive 965
Some taste of comfort in a world of woe,
Then let the supercilious great confess
He serves his country; recompenses well
The state beneath the shadow of whose vine
He sits secure, and in the scale of life 970
Holds no ignoble, though a slighted place.
The man whose virtues are more felt than seen,
Must drop indeed the hope of public praise;
But he may boast what few that win it can,
That if his country stand not by his skill, 975
At least his follies have not wrought her fall.
Polite refinement offers him in vain
Her golden tube, through which a sensual world
Draws gross impurity, and likes it well,
The neat conveyance hiding all the offence. 980
Not that he peevishly rejects a mode
Because that world adopts it[29]: if it bear
The stamp and clear impression of good sense,
And be not costly more than of true worth,
He puts it on, and for decorum sake 985
Can wear it even as gracefully as she[30].

[29] Though wrong the mode, comply; more sense is shown
In wearing others' follies than your own.
Young. Satire iv.

[30] Be not the first by whom the new are tried,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.
Pope. Essay on Crit. ii. 338.

She judges of refinement by the eye,
He by the test of conscience, and a heart
Not soon deceived; aware that what is base
No polish can make sterling, and that vice 990
Though well perfumed and elegantly dress'd,
Like an unburied carcase trick'd with flowers,
Is but a garnish'd nuisance, fitter far
For cleanly riddance than for fair attire.
So life glides smoothly and by stealth away, 995
More golden than that age of fabled gold
Renown'd in ancient song; not vex'd with care
Or stained with guilt, beneficent, approved
Of God and man, and peaceful in its end.
So glide my life away[31]! and so at last 1000
My share of duties decently fulfilled
May some disease, not tardy to perform
Its destined office, yet with gentle stroke,
Dismiss me weary to a safe retreat
Beneath the turf that I have often trod. 1005
It shall not grieve me, then, that once when called
To dress a Sofa with the flowers of verse,
I play'd awhile, obedient to the fair,
With that light task; but soon to please her more
Whom flowers alone I knew would little please, 1010
Let fall the unfinish'd wreath, and roved for fruit.
Roved far and gather'd much. Some harsh, 'tis true,
Pick'd from the thorns and briers of reproof,
But wholesome, well-digested. Grateful some
To palates that can taste immortal truth, 1015
Insipid else, and sure to be despised.

[31] And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage. *Penseroso.*

Thus sheltered, free from care and strife
May I enjoy a calm through life,
Unhurt by sickness' blasting rage,
And slowly mellowing in age
When fate extends its gathering gripe.
Quit a worn being without pain,
Perhaps to blossom soon again. *Spleen.*

Beg to lay it down,
Glad to be so dismissed in peace. *Par. Lost*, ii. 506.

But all is in His hand whose praise I seek.
In vain the poet sings, and the world hears,
If he regard not, though divine the theme.
'Tis not in artful measures, in the chime 1020
And idle tinkling of a minstrel's lyre
To charm His ear, whose eye is on the heart,
Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,
Whose approbation— prosper even mine.

INDEX TO THE TASK.

"Acquaint thyself with God," v. 779.
Action, i. 367.
Actor, iv. 200.
Address to domestic happiness, iii. 41. 292.
Address to the Saviour, vi. 855.
Address to Winter, iv. 120.
Address to rural life, iv. 780.
Address to Evening, iv. 243.
Address to the Creator, v. 849. 893.
Address to the Starry Host, v. 822.
Adulation, v. 260.
Ægypt, (plague of frogs) ii. 827.
Affectation, ii. 417.
Air and exercise, i. 589.
Alcove, i. 278.
Alert and active, i. 396.
America lost, ii. 263.
Amusements, i. 463.
Ancient philosophy, ii. 500.
Angler, iii. 313.
Animals enjoying life, vi. 325.
Animals, sagacity and fidelity, vi. 610.
Antiquity, self-taught rites, vi. 231.
Apostrophe to London, iii. 835.
Apostrophe to popular applause, ii. 481.
Appetites, v. 630.
Aristæus, v. 135.
Atheist, vi. 486.
Auction, vi. 286.
Ausonia, ii. 214 ; iii. 582.
Authority asleep, iv. 593.
Azores, iii. 583.
Babel, v. 193.
Bacon (sculptor), i. 702.
Balaam, vi. 467.
Bastile, v. 383.
Battered fortunes, iii. 824.
Beauty and old age, iii. 601.
Bells, i. 174 ; vi. 6. 65.
Ben'et College, ii. 785.
Benevolus, i. 262. 331.
Billiards, iv. 221 ; vi. 274.
Birds in winter, v. 77.
Bodies corporate, iv. 671.
Books, iii. 392 ; iv. 158 ; vi. 87. 98.
Bribe, iii. 796 ; iv. 609.
Brotherhood, iii. 208.
Brown ("Capability"), iii. 766.
Brown study, iv. 296.
Cæsar's laurels, vi. 939.
Caffraia, iii. 585.
Cain, v. 208.
Calenture, i. 447.
Candid and liberal, iii. 93
Captive, ii. 127 ; v. 400.
Cards, i. 472 ; iv. 207. 229.
Carnivorous through sin, vi. 457.
Carvers, rural, i. 281.
Champions of England, v. 511.
Chance, ii. 168 ; v. 865.
Change of scene, i. 507.
Chatham, ii. 237.
Chess, vi. 265.
Church fares ill, vi. 888.
Cities, i. 128. 689 ; iii. 729.
Civilized life, i. 596. 679 ; iv. 659.
Clerical coxcomb, ii. 445.
Clouds, v. 2.
College discipline, ii. 699.
Colonnade of trees, i. 252. 355 ; vi. 70.
Commerce, iii. 739.
Common, i. 526.
Composure, iv. 260.
Compunction, v. 616.
Connoisseur, vi. 284.
Conscience, iii. 185 ; v. 600. 666.
Constraint, v. 448.

Contemplation, vi. 263. 924.
Contrivers of creation, iii. 156; vi. 198.
Conventicle, ii. 437.
Country, ("God made,") i. 749; iii. 708.
Country, few lovers of it, iii. 293. 725.
Country deserted, iii. 711. 750; iv. 589.
Country, who love it, iii. 320.
Course of human things, iv. 578.
Cowley, iv. 723.
Cowper, account of himself, iii. 108; early love of the country, iv. 695; wish or tranquil end, vi. 999; his brother's character, ii. 780.
Crazy Kate, i. 534.
Cruelty to animals, vi. 381. 594.
Cucumber, iii. 462. 566.
Custom, force of, v. 299.
Cyrene, v. 136.
Death unrepealable, v. 610.
Decorum, vi. 981.
Deist, v. 670.
Demagogue, iv. 61.
Despot, v. 311.
Dice, iv. 221.
Discipline, ii. 702.
Discord, iv. 482.
Discourse, iv. 174.
Disgust concealed, iii. 38.
Domestic happiness, iii. 41. 292. 675.
Drama, iv. 199.
Dreams of mankind, iii. 127. 188.
Dress, ii. 600.
Drunkenness, iv. 470. 505.
Early rising, i. 500.
Earthquake, ii. 89.
Ease, i. 409.
East wind, iv. 363.
Eden, vi. 352.
Employments of the idle, iii. 352.
Empress of Russia, v. 129.
Encomium, vi. 715.
England, ii. 206; iii. 742; v. 456. 525.
Enmity, ii. 18.
Epictetus, ii. 540
Eternity for bubbles, iii. 175.
Evander, vi. 490.
Evening, address to, iv. 243.
Excise, iv. 471.
Excursive poem, iv. 232.
Exercise, i. 367.
Exile, v. 832.
Fables false as hell, v. 862.
Fair, eloquent, iv. 53.
Familiarity with nature, vi. 121.
Famine, ii. 185.
Fancy, iv. 242. 286.
Fashion, ii. 598; vi. 852.
Father, vi. 30.
Fatigue of idleness, i. 395. 755
Fatigue of thought, vi. 106.
Feats of nature, v. 118.
Fiddle, iv. 478.
Fire-side enjoyments, iv. 140.
Flora, i. 455.
Flowers, iii. 648.
Foddering of cattle, v. 30.
Folly, ii. 283; iii. 34.
Fontainbleau, ii. 262.
Forebodings, v. 606.
Fortune, ii. 658.
France, ii, 213. 264; v. 468.
Freedom, ii. 33. 130; v. 375.
Freeman truth makes free, v. 733. 883.
Frost, fantastic doings, v. 113.
Frosty morning, v. 7.
Gaiety, i. 504.
Gaming, i. 503; iii. 761.
Gardening, iii. 397. 658.
Garrick, iii. 598; vi. 654.
Geologist, iii. 150.
Ghostly counsel, ii. 556.
Gipsies, i, 559.
Glide my life away! vi. 1000
God in every thing, ii. 161, v. 808; vi. 221.
God's works and word, iii. 222; v. 561. 779.
Golden age, iv. 514.
Goliath, iv. 270.
Gout, i. 105.
Grace, v. 688.
Gratitude and love, iv. 182.
Great offices, iv. 788.
Green-house, iii. 566.
Groans of Nature, vi. 728.

Grove, i. 307. 354. 753; iii. 734.
Guilty splendour, iii. 70.
Hale, (Sir Matt.) iii. 258.
Hampden, v. 486.
Handel, vi. 637.
Happily-temper'd minds, ii. 788.
Happy man. vi. 247. 906.
Hare, tame, iii. 334.
Hay-field, i. 295.
Headland, i. 518.
Health, i. 750.
Heavenward all things tend, vi. 818.
History writers, iii. 139.
Homeborn happiness, iv. 140.
Homer, iii. 454.
Honest pride, iv. 405.
Honest rags, iii. 806.
Horace, iv. 190.
Humanity, iii. 196.
Hume, v. 729.
Hunting, iii. 326.
Hypocrisy, iii. 100.
Ice-palace, v. 127.
"Idle man's" employment, iii. 352.
Idleness fatiguing, i. 755.
Idol of the mob, v. 260; vi. 710.
Imprisonment, v. 397.
Improvement "idol of the age," iii. 764.
India, iv. 28.
Infidel, vi. 872.
Invocation of the Saviour, vi. 855.
Jockeyship, ii. 276.
Jocular preacher, ii. 463.
Jotham, v. 322.
Isaac, vi. 948.
Italy, ii. 214.
Katterfelto, iv. 86.
Kings, v. 241. 279.
Knowledge and wisdom, vi. 88.
Labour, i. 363.
Lamp of truth, v. 845.
Langford, vi. 287.
Lark, i. 493.
Leviathan, ii. 322.
Liberty, v. 367. 446.
Liberty "unsung," v. 538. 778.
Life of turbulence, iii. 379.
Life of pleasure, i. 463.
Light, dancing, i. 345.
Lion, vi. 408.
London, ii. 697. 749; iii. 816; iv. 748.
Love of Nature "nature's dictate," i. 412; iv. 731.
Loyalty, v. 347.
Lubbard labour, iii. 400.
Lucullus, ii. 596.
Magisterial sword, iv. 596.
Man "a wolf to man," iv. 103.
Man in society, iv. 659.
Man praises man, vi. 632. 694.
Man o' the town, ii. 622.
Mansions forsaken, iii. 746.
Martyrs, v. 718.
Mass of mankind, v. 247.
Meditation, vi. 84.
Memory, iv. 183; vi. 12.
Mercy, vi. 588.
Metropolitan volcanoes, iii. 737.
Militia, iv. 617.
Millennium, vi. 759.
Milton, iii. 255; iv. 709.
Miracle "all we behold," vi. 132.
Misagathus, vi. 485.
Mob, vi. 694.
Mole, i. 273.
Monitor, ii. 580.
Moon, iv. 3. 254.
Moralists, ii. 531; v. 670.
Mother, vi. 43.
Multitude, iii. 673; v. 247.
Music, iv. 160.
Mutability, v. 529.
Nasal twang, ii. 436.
Nature "free to all," iii. 721; love of it "Nature's dictate," i. 412; iv. 731; "a name for an effect," vi. 223; its Author disclosed, v. 891. Nebuchadnezzar's dream, v. 400.
Newspaper, iv 50.
Newton, iii. 252.
Nightingale, i. 200.
Noah, vi. 450.
Novelty, iii. 54; vi. 706.
Nymph, rural, iv. 534.
Oak, i. 377.
Oaths, iv. 491. 629.

Omai, i. 633.
Orator, iv. 66.
Orpheus, v. 694.
Ouse, i. 163. 323.
Owl, i. 205.
Painter's magic skill, i. 422.
Paradise Lost, iv. 709.
Parlour twilight, iv. 278.
Parson, convivial, iv. 595.
Pastoral office, ii. 545.
Pastoral security "gone," iv. 558.
Patience, iv. 339.
Patriot, mock, iii. 794; v. 495.
Patriots and martyrs, v. 704.
Paul, ii. 395. 472. 539.
Peace recommended, ii. 48.
Peasant's nest, i. 227.
Peculator, i. 735.
Peep at the world, iv. 89.
Penury, iv. 397.
Pestilence, ii. 140.
Petit-maître parson, ii. 378.
Philips (John), iii. 455.
Philosopher, ii. 189; v. 670.
Philosophy, ii. 174. 505; vi. 198.
Philosophy "baptized," iii. 243.
Plato, ii. 540.
Playthings of princes, v. 177.
Pleasure, "reeling Goddess," iii. 51.
Pleasure and gain, vi. 892.
Plunderer, iv. 432.
Poetic pains, ii. 285.
Politics, v. 493.
Poor family piece, iv. 374.
Popular applause, ii. 481.
Portents, ii. 57.
Portion of revolted man, v. 581.
Postman, iv. 5.
Poverty, iv. 429.
Poultry, v. 62.
Praise, ii. 488; vi. 632. 711.
Preachers, ii. 337. 440.
Pretender, vi. 659.
Primrose, vi. 112.
Prodigies, ii. 53.
Profusion, ii. 697. 820.
Property, sweets of, v. 224.
Prophecy, vi. 747.
Public houses, iv. 470.
Public virtue, v. 502.
Pulpit, ii. 326.
Purity, iii. 84.
Rabble, servile, vi. 694.
Ramble (schoolboy's), i. 115.
Reading, iii. 392; iv. 158.
Reasonings of the sensual; v. 655.
Recruit, iv. 631.
Refinement, vi. 977.
Relapse, v. 623.
Remorse, v. 618.
Restoration of all things, vi. 819.
Retailers of ancient philosophy, ii. 536.
Retired man vindicated, vi. 906.
Retired man's employments, ii. 352. 423.
Retirement, iii. 117; iv. 142.
Retreat, iii. 676.
Retrospect, vi. 19.
Revelation, ii. 527.
Reynolds, i. 700.
Riches' wings, iii. 263. 760.
Robin, vi. 77.
Rooks and kites, i. 203.
Roscius, iii. 597.
Rout, ii. 629.
Rural life, hail! iv. 783.
Rural lass, iv. 534.
Rural sounds, i. 181.
Sabbath rites, i. 746.
Samson, v. 737.
Satire, ii. 315; iii. 26.
Savage life, i. 604.
Scenes surpassing fable, vi. 759.
Schoolboy, i. 114.
Schools, ii. 735.
Sculpture, i. 706.
Seats, i. 1. 75.
Seclusion, iii. 675.
Sedentary, i. 389.
Self-control, iii. 373; vi. 937.
Self-recollection, iii. 1; iv. 305.
Self sequestered man, iii. 386.
Sensibility, vi. 562.
Sermons (engraved), ii. 364.
Servitude, v. 302. 363.
Shadow (ludicrous), v. 10.
Sheepfold, i. 290.

Shining hosts, v. 822.
Shopping, vi. 279.
Shrubbery, vi. 147.
Sicily, ii. 75.
Sidney (Sir P.), iv. 516; Algernon, v. 486.
Silence, "Poet's treasure," i. 235.
Simplicity (lost), iv. 539.
Sin, ii. 133.
Singing, iv. 162.
Slavery, ii. 29.
Sleep, i. 89.
Slighted good, vi. 51.
Smoking, iv. 472; 555.
Snow, iv. 326; v. 21.
Sofa and other seats, i. 1. 102.
Soldiership, i. 771; ii. 269; iv. 617.
Solitude and society, i. 248.
Solitude, dreaded, i. 488; sighed for, ii. 1.
South Sea islanders, i. 620.
Sparrow, v. 65.
Spire, i. 174.
Spiritual liberty, v. 538.
Spleen, i. 455.
Sportsman, iii. 310.
Spring, vi. 180.
Spurious peace, v. 621.
Squirrel, vi. 315.
Stars, iv. 253; v. 819.
Statesman of the day, vi. 696.
Still small voice, v. 685.
Stillest streams, vi. 929.
Stillness, vi. 83.
Stock dove, vi. 307.
Stratford jubilee, vi. 680.
Sunrise, v. 1.
Supper, iv. 168.
Sympathy, iv. 340.
Tea, iii. 391; iv. 38.
Tempest, ii. 181.
Temptation, fly it! i. 692; iii. 688.
Theatre, iii. 597: vi. 670.
Thief (rural), iv. 432. 570.
Thought, vi. 90. 106.
Thresher, i. 356.
Throckmorton, i. 262. 331.
Time, iv. 210; v. 530.
Times, degenerate, vi. 900.
Town, i. 749; iii. 815; iv. 553.
Traveller (useless), iv. 234.
Travels (fire-side), iv. 88.
Trees, i. 301.
Truth, ii. 499; iii. 242.
Tubal, v. 217.
Tully, ii. 540.
Variety (earth's), i. 506.
Vice, iii. 106; vi. 990.
Villas (London), iv. 748.
Virgil, iii. 453; iv. 705.
Virtue, iii. 48; v. 502. 677.
Voice, iv. 162.
Urn, iv. 38.
Waggoner, iv. 341
War, iv. 100; v. 185. 228. 314.
Water-cresses, vi. 304.
Wayward intellect, iii. 236.
Weather house, i. 211.
Weeds, iii. 670.
Whirlwind, ii. 149.
Wild beasts, vi. 397.
Wilderness, i. 351; vi. 401.
Winter, address to, iv. 120.
Winter morning, v. 1.
Winter evening employments, iv. 143.
Wisdom, iii. 381; iv. 336; v. 797; vi. 88. 114.
Wolfe, ii. 238.
Woodland scene, i. 300.
Woodman, v. 41.
Word of God, iii. 223.
Works of God, v. 553. 779.
World, peep at, iv. 89.
World, thorny, iv. 333.
World a prison house, ii. 661.
World, just, vi. 826; transient, v 563.
Zodiac in the dust, iii. 647.

AN EPISTLE TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Dear Joseph,—five and twenty years ago—
Alas! how time escapes—'tis even so!—
With frequent intercourse and always sweet
And always friendly we were wont to cheat
A tedious hour,—and now we never meet,
As some grave gentleman in Terence says,
('Twas therefore much the same in ancient days,)
Good lack, we know not what to-morrow brings,—
Strange fluctuation of all human things!
True. Changes will befall, and friends may part,
But distance only cannot change the heart:
And were I call'd to prove the assertion true,
One proof should serve, a reference to you.
Whence comes it then, that in the wane of life,
Though nothing have occurr'd to kindle strife,
We find the friends we fancied we had won,
Though numerous once, reduced to few or none?
Can gold grow worthless that has stood the touch?
No. Gold they seemed, but they were never such.
Horatio's servant once, with bow and cringe
Swinging the parlour door upon its hinge,
Dreading a negative, and overawed
Lest he should trespass, begg'd to go abroad.
Go, fellow!—whither?—turning short about—
Nay. Stay at home;—you're always going out.
'Tis but a step, sir, just at the street's end.—
For what?—An please you, sir, to see a friend.
A friend? Horatio cried, and seem'd to start,—
Yea marry shalt thou, and with all my heart—
And fetch my cloak, for though the night be raw
I'll see him too—the first I ever saw.
I knew the man, and knew his nature mild,
And was his plaything often when a child;
But somewhat at that moment pinch'd him close,
Else he was seldom bitter or morose:
Perhaps his confidence just then betray'd,
His grief might prompt him with the speech he made;
Perhaps 'twas mere good humour gave it birth,

The harmless play of pleasantry and mirth.
Howe'er it was, his language in my mind
Bespoke at least a man that knew mankind.
But not to moralize too much, and strain
To prove an evil of which all complain,
(I hate long arguments, verbosely spun,)
One story more, dear Hill, and I have done.
Once on a time, an Emperor, a wise man,
No matter where, in China or Japan,
Decreed that whosoever should offend
Against the well-known duties of a friend,
Convicted once, should ever after wear
But half a coat, and show his bosom bare;
The punishment importing this, no doubt,
That all was naught within, and all found out.
Oh happy Britain! we have not to fear
Such hard and arbitrary measures here;
Else could a law like that which I relate,
Once have the sanction of our triple state,
Some few[1] that I have known in days of old
Would run most dreadful risk of catching cold.
While you, my friend, whatever wind should blow,
Might traverse England safely to and fro,
An honest man, close-button'd to the chin,
Broad-cloth without, and a warm heart within.

[1] In a letter to Mr. Newton, (July 9, 1785,) Cowper tells him that Thurlow and Colman are the former friends to whom he particularly alludes in these lines, "and it is possible," he adds, "that they may take to themselves a censure that they so well deserve. If not, it matters not; for I shall never have any communication with them hereafter." After the success of his second volume, however, their acquaintance was renewed, and Cowper forgave the unkindness of their neglect.

TIROCINIUM:

OR,

A REVIEW OF SCHOOLS.

Κεφαλαιον δη παιδειας ορθη τροφη.

PLATO.

Αρχη πολιτειας απασης, νεων τροφα.

DIOG. LAERT.

TO THE

REV. WILLIAM CAWTHORNE UNWIN,

RECTOR OF STOCK IN ESSEX,

THE TUTOR OF HIS TWO SONS,

THE FOLLOWING

Poem,

RECOMMENDING PRIVATE TUITION

IN PREFERENCE TO

AN EDUCATION AT SCHOOL,

IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND

WILLIAM COWPER.

Olney, Nov. 6, 1784.

TIROCINIUM.

It is not from his form in which we trace
Strength joined with beauty, dignity with grace,
That man, the master of this globe, derives
His right of empire over all that lives.
That form indeed, the associate of a mind
Vast in its powers, ethereal in its kind,
That form, the labour of Almighty skill,
Framed for the service of a free-born will,
Asserts precedence, and bespeaks controul,
But borrows all its grandeur from the soul.
Hers is the state, the splendour and the throne,
An intellectual kingdom, all her own.
For her, the memory fills her ample page
With truths pour'd down from every distant age,
For her amasses an unbounded store,
The wisdom of great nations, now no more,
Though laden, not encumber'd with her spoil,
Laborious, yet unconscious of her toil,
When copiously supplied then most enlarged,
Still to be fed, and not to be surcharged.
For her, the fancy roving unconfined,
The present Muse of every pensive mind,
Works magic wonders, adds a brighter hue
To nature's scenes, than nature ever knew;
At her command, winds rise and waters roar,
Again she lays them slumbering on the shore;
With flower and fruit the wilderness supplies,
Or bids the rocks in ruder pomp arise.
For her, the judgement, umpire in the strife,
That grace and nature have to wage through life,
Quick-sighted arbiter of good and ill,
Appointed sage preceptor to the will,
Condemns, approves, and with a faithful voice
Guides the decision of a doubtful choice.
  Why did the fiat of a God give birth
To yon fair sun and his attendant earth,

And when descending he resigns the skies,
Why takes the gentler moon her turn to rise,
Whom ocean feels through all his countless waves,
And owns her power on every shore he laves?
Why do the seasons still enrich the year,
Fruitful and young as in their first career?
Spring hangs her infant blossoms on the trees,
Rock'd in the cradle of the western breeze;
Summer in haste the thriving charge receives
Beneath the shade of her expanded leaves,
Till autumn's fiercer heats and plenteous dews
Dye them at last in all their glowing hues;—
'Twere wild profusion all, and bootless waste,
Power misemployed, munificence misplaced,
Had not its Author dignified the plan,
And crowned it with a majesty of man.
Thus form'd, thus placed, intelligent, and taught,
Look where he will, the wonders God has wrought,
The wildest scorner of his Maker's laws
Finds in a sober moment time to pause,
To press the important question on his heart,
"Why form'd at all, and wherefore as thou art?"
If man be what he seems, this hour a slave,
The next mere dust and ashes in the grave,
Endued with reason only to descry
His crimes and follies with an aching eye,
With passions, just that he may prove with pain
The force he spends against their fury, vain;
And if soon after having burnt by turns
With every lust with which frail nature burns,
His being end where death dissolves the bond,
The tomb take all, and all be blank beyond,
Then he, of all that nature has brought forth,
Stands self-impeach'd the creature of least worth,
And useless while he lives, and when he dies,
Brings into doubt the wisdom of the skies.
  Truths that the learn'd pursue with eager thought,
Are not important always as dear-bought,
Proving at last, though told in pompous strains,
A childish waste of philosophic pains;
But truths on which depends our main concern,
That 'tis our shame and misery not to learn,

Shine by the side of every path we tread
With such a lustre, he that runs may read.
'Tis true, that if to trifle life away
Down to the sunset of their latest day,
Then perish on futurity's wide shore
Like fleeting exhalations, found no more,
Were all that Heaven required of human kind,
And all the plan their destiny designed,
What none could reverence all might justly blame,
And man would breathe but for his Maker's shame.
But reason heard, and nature well perused,
At once the dreaming mind is disabused,
If all we find possessing earth, sea, air,
Reflect his attributes who placed them there,
Fulfil the purpose, and appear design'd
Proofs of the wisdom of the all-seeing Mind,
'Tis plain, the creature whom he chose to invest
With kingship and dominion o'er the rest,
Received his nobler nature, and was made
Fit for the power in which he stands array'd,
That first or last, hereafter if not here,
He too might make his Author's wisdom clear,
Praise him on earth, or obstinately dumb
Suffer his justice in a world to come.
This once believed, 'twere logic misapplied
To prove a consequence by none denied,
That we are bound to cast the minds of youth
Betimes into the mould of heavenly truth,
That taught of God they may indeed be wise,
Nor ignorantly wandering miss the skies.
  In early days the conscience has in most
A quickness, which in later life is lost.
Preserved from guilt by salutary fears,
Or, guilty, soon relenting into tears.
Too careless often as our years proceed,
What friends we sort with, or what books we read,
Our parents yet exert a prudent care
To feed our infant minds with proper fare,
And wisely store the nursery by degrees
With wholesome learning, yet acquired with ease.
Neatly secured from being soiled or torn
Beneath a pane of thin translucent horn,

A book (to please us at a tender age
'Tis call'd a book, though but a single page,)
Presents the prayer the Saviour deign'd to teach,
Which children use, and parsons—when they preach.
Lisping our syllables, we scramble next,
Through moral narrative, or sacred text,
And learn with wonder how this world began,
Who made, who marr'd, and who has ransom'd man :
Points, which unless the Scripture made them plain,
The wisest heads might agitate in vain.
Oh thou, whom borne on fancy's eager wing
Back to the season of life's happy spring,
I pleased remember, and while memory yet
Holds fast her office here, can ne'er forget,
Ingenious dreamer, in whose well-told tale
Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail,
Whose humorous vein, strong sense, and simple style,
May teach the gayest, make the gravest smile,
Witty, and well employed, and like thy Lord
Speaking in parables his slighted word,—
I name thee not, lest so despised a name
Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame,
Yet even in transitory life's late day
That mingles all my brown with sober gray,
Revere the man, whose *Pilgrim* marks the road
And guides the *Progress* of the soul to God.
'Twere well with most, if books that could engage
Their childhood, pleased them at a riper age ;
The man approving what had charm'd the boy,
Would die at last in comfort, peace, and joy,
And not with curses on his art who stole
The gem of truth from his unguarded soul.
The stamp of artless piety impress'd
By kind tuition on his yielding breast,
The youth now bearded, and yet pert and raw,
Regards with scorn, though once received with awe,
And warp'd into the labyrinth of lies
That babblers, called philosophers, devise,
Blasphemes his creed as founded on a plan
Replete with dreams, unworthy of a man.
Touch but his nature in its ailing part,
Assert the native evil of his heart,

His pride resents the charge, although the proof[1]
Rise in his forehead, and seem rank enough;
Point to the cure, describe a Saviour's cross
As God's expedient to retrieve his loss,
The young apostate sickens at the view,
And hates it with the malice of a Jew.
How weak the barrier of mere nature proves
Opposed against the pleasures nature loves!
While self-betray'd, and wilfully undone,
She longs to yield, no sooner wooed than won.
Try now the merits of this blest exchange
Of modest truth for wit's eccentric range.
Time was, he closed as he began the day
With decent duty, not ashamed to pray;
The practice was a bond upon his heart,
A pledge he gave for a consistent part,
Nor could he dare presumptuously displease
A power confess'd so lately on his knees.
But now, farewell all legendary tales,
The shadows fly, philosophy prevails,
Prayer to the winds and caution to the waves,
Religion makes the free by nature slaves,
Priests have invented, and the world admired
What knavish priests promulgate as inspired,
'Till reason, now no longer overawed,
Resumes her powers, and spurns the clumsy fraud,
And common sense diffusing real day,
The meteor of the gospel dies away.
Such rhapsodies our shrewd discerning youth
Learn from expert enquirers after truth,
Whose only care, might truth presume to speak,
Is not to find what they profess to seek.
And thus well tutor'd only while we share
A mother's lectures and a nurse's care,
And taught at schools much mythologic stuff[2],
But sound religion sparingly enough,

[1] See Chron. xxvi. 19.

[2] The author begs leave to explain; sensible that without such knowledge, neither the ancient poets nor historians can be tasted or indeed understood, he does not mean to censure the pains that are taken to instruct a school-boy in the religion of the heathen, but merely that neglect of Christian culture which leaves him shamefully ignorant of his own.

Our early notices of truth disgraced
Soon lose their credit, and are all effaced.
  Would you your son should be a sot or dunce,
Lascivious, headstrong, or all these at once,
That in good time, the stripling's finish'd taste
For loose expense and fashionable waste
Should prove your ruin, and his own at last,
Train him in public with a mob of boys,
Childish in mischief only and in noise,
Else of a mannish growth, and five in ten
In infidelity and lewdness, men.
There shall he learn, ere sixteen winters old,
That authors are most useful, pawn'd or sold,
That pedantry is all that schools impart,
But taverns teach the knowledge of the heart;
There waiter Dick with Bacchanalian lays
Shall win his heart and have his drunken praise,
His counsellor and bosom friend shall prove,
And some street-pacing harlot his first love.
Schools, unless discipline were doubly strong,
Detain their adolescent charge too long.
The management of Tiro's of eighteen
Is difficult, their punishment obscene.
The stout tall Captain, whose superior size
The minor heroes view with envious eyes,
Becomes their pattern, upon whom they fix
Their whole attention, and ape all his tricks.
His pride that scorns to obey or to submit,
With them is courage, his effrontery wit;
His wild excursions, window-breaking feats,
Robbery of gardens, quarrels in the streets,
His hair-breadth 'scapes, and all his daring schemes,
Transport them and are made their favourite themes.
In little bosoms such achievements strike
A kindred spark, they burn to do the like.
Thus half accomplish'd, ere he yet begin
To show the peeping down upon his chin,
And as maturity of years comes on
Made just the adept that you design'd your son,
To insure the perseverance of his course,
And give your monstrous project all its force,

Send him to college. If he there be tamed,
Or in one article of vice reclaimed,
Where no regard of ord'nances is shown,
Or look'd for now, the fault must be his own.
Some sneaking virtue lurks in him no doubt,
Where neither strumpet's charms nor drinking-bout,
Nor gambling practices can find it out.
Such youths of spirit, and that spirit too,
Ye nurseries of our boys, we owe to you.
Though from ourselves the mischief more proceeds,
For public schools 'tis public folly feeds.
The slaves of custom and establish'd mode,
With pack-horse constancy we keep the road
Crooked or straight, through quags or thorny dells,
True to the jingling of our leader's bells.
To follow foolish precedents, and wink
With both our eyes, is easier than to think,
And such an age as ours baulks no expense
Except of caution and of common sense;
Else, sure, notorious fact and proof so plain
Would turn our steps into a wiser train.
I blame not those who with what care they can
O'erwatch the numerous and unruly clan,
Or if I blame, 'tis only that they dare
Promise a work of which they must despair.
Have ye, ye sage intendants of the whole,
An ubiquarian presence and controul,
Elisha's eye, that when Gehazi stray'd
Went with him, and saw all the game he play'd?
Yes, ye are conscious; and on all the shelves
Your pupils strike upon, have struck yourselves.
Or if by nature sober, ye had then,
Boys as ye were, the gravity of men,
Ye knew at least, by constant proofs address'd
To ears and eyes, the vices of the rest.
But ye connive at what ye cannot cure,
And evils not to be endured, endure,
Lest power exerted, but without success,
Should make the little ye retain still less.
Ye once were justly famed for bringing forth
Undoubted scholarship and genuine worth,

And in the firmament of fame still shines
A glory bright as that of all the signs,
Of poets raised by you, and statesmen and divines.
Peace to them all, those brilliant times are fled,
And no such lights are kindling in their stead.
Our striplings shine indeed, but with such rays
As set the midnight riot in a blaze,
And seem, if judged by their expressive looks,
Deeper in none than in their surgeons' books.
Say, Muse, (for education made the song,
No Muse can hesitate or linger long,)
What causes move us, knowing as we must
That these *Menageries* all fail their trust,
To send our sons to scout and scamper there,
While colts and puppies cost us so much care?
Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,
We love the play-place of our early days.
The scene is touching, and the heart is stone
That feels not at that sight, and feels at none.
The wall on which we tried our graving skill,
The very name we carved subsisting still,
The bench on which we sat while deep-employ'd,
Though mangled, hack'd and hew'd, not yet destroy'd;
The little ones unbutton'd, glowing hot,
Playing our games, and on the very spot,
As happy as we once, to kneel and draw
The chalky ring, and knuckle down at taw,
To pitch the ball into the grounded hat,
Or drive it devious with a dexterous pat;
The pleasing spectacle at once excites
Such recollection of our own delights,
That viewing it, we seem almost to obtain
Our innocent sweet simple years again.
This fond attachment to the well-known place
Whence first we started into life's long race,
Maintains its hold with such unfailing sway,
We feel it even in age, and at our latest day.
Hark! how the sire of chits, whose future share
Of classic food begins to be his care,
With his own likeness placed on either knee,
Indulges all a father's heart-felt glee,

And tells them, as he strokes their silver locks,
That they must soon learn Latin and to box;
Then turning, he regales his listening wife
With all the adventures of his early life,
His skill in coachmanship or driving chaise,
In bilking tavern bills and spouting plays,
What shifts he used detected in a scrape,
How he was flogg'd, or had the luck to escape,
What sums he lost at play, and how he sold
Watch, seals, and all, till all his pranks are told.
Retracing thus his *frolics*, ('tis a name
That palliates deeds of folly and of shame,)
He gives the local bias all its sway,
Resolves that where he play'd his sons shall play,
And destines their bright genius to be shown
Just in the scene where he display'd his own.
The meek and bashful boy will soon be taught
To be as bold and forward as he ought;
The rude will scuffle through with ease enough,
Great schools suit best the sturdy and the rough.
Ah happy designation, prudent choice,
The' event is sure, expect it and rejoice!
Soon see your wish fulfilled in either child,
The pert made perter, and the tame made wild.
The great indeed, by titles, riches, birth,
Excused the encumbrance of more solid worth,
Are best disposed of, where with most success
They may acquire that confident address,
Those habits of profuse and lewd expense,
That scorn of all delights but those of sense,
Which though in plain plebeians we condemn,
With so much reason all expect from them.
But families of less illustrious fame,
Whose chief distinction is their spotless name,
Whose heirs, their honours none, their income small,
Must shine by true desert, or not at all,
What dream they of, that with so little care
They risk their hopes, their dearest treasure there?
They dream of little Charles or William graced
With wig prolix, down-flowing to his waist;
They see the attentive crowds his talents draw,
They hear him speak—the oracle of law.

The father who designs his babe a priest,
Dreams him episcopally such at least,
And while the playful jockey scours the room
Briskly astride, upon the parlour broom,
In fancy sees him more superbly ride
In coach with purple lined, and mitres on its side.
Events improbable and strange as these,
Which only a parental eye foresees,
A public school shall bring to pass with ease.
But how? resides such virtue in that air
As must create an appetite for prayer?
And will it breathe into him all the zeal
That candidates for such a prize should feel,
To take the lead and be the foremost still
In all true worth and literary skill?
"Ah blind to bright futurity, untaught
The knowledge of the world, and dull of thought!
Church-ladders are not always mounted best
By learned Clerks and Latinists profess'd.
The exalted prize demands an upward look,
Not to be found by poring on a book.
Small skill in Latin, and still less in Greek,
Is more than adequate to all I seek;
Let erudition grace him or not grace,
I give the bauble but the second place;
His wealth, fame, honours, all that I intend,
Subsist and centre in one point, a friend.
A friend, whate'er he studies or neglects,
Shall give him consequence, heal all defects;
His intercourse with peers and sons of peers,—
There dawns the splendour of his future years,
In that bright quarter his propitious skies
Shall blush betimes, and there his glory rise.
Your Lordship and *your Grace*, what school can teach
A rhetoric equal to those parts of speech?
What need of Homer's verse, or Tully's prose,
Sweet interjections! if he learn but those?
Let reverend churls his ignorance rebuke,
Who starve upon a dog's-ear'd Pentateuch,
The parson knows enough who knows a Duke."—
Egregious purpose! worthily begun
In barbarous prostitution of your son,

Pressed on *his* part by means that would disgrace
A scrivener's clerk or footman out of place,
And ending, if at last its end be gain'd,
In sacrilege, in God's own house profaned.
It may succeed; and if his sins should call
For more than common punishment, it shall.
The wretch shall rise, and be the thing on earth
Least qualified in honour, learning, worth,
To occupy a sacred, aweful post,
In which the best and worthiest tremble most.
The *royal letters* are a thing of course,
A king that would might recommend his horse,
And Deans no doubt and Chapters, with one voice,
As bound in duty, would confirm the choice.
Behold your Bishop! well he plays his part,
Christian in name, and infidel in heart,
Ghostly in office, earthly in his plan,
A slave at court, elsewhere a lady's man,
Dumb as a senator, and as a priest
A piece of mere church-furniture at best;
To live estranged from God his total scope,
And his end sure, without one glimpse of hope.
But fair although and feasible it seem,
Depend not much upon your golden dream;
For Providence that seems concern'd to exempt
The hallowed bench from absolute contempt,
In spite of all the wrigglers into place,
Still keeps a seat or two for worth and grace;
And therefore 'tis, that, though the sight be rare,
We sometimes see a Lowth or Bagot there.
Besides, school-friendships are not always found,
Though fair in promise, permanent and sound.
The most disinterested and virtuous minds
In early years connected, time unbinds;
New situations give a different cast
Of habit, inclination, temper, taste,
And he that seem'd our counterpart at first,
Soon shows the strong similitude reversed.
Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,
And make mistakes for manhood to reform.
Boys are at best but pretty buds unblown,
Whose scent and hues are rather guess'd than known.

Each dreams that each is just what he appears,
But learns his error in maturer years,
When disposition, like a sail unfurl'd,
Shows all its rents and patches to the world.
If therefore, even when honest in design,
A boyish friendship may so soon decline,
'Twere wiser sure to inspire a little heart
With just abhorrence of so mean a part,
Than set your son to work at a vile trade
For wages so unlikely to be paid.
  Our public hives of puerile resort
That are of chief and most approved report,
To such base hopes in many a sordid soul
Owe their repute in part, but not the whole.
A principle, whose proud pretensions pass
Unquestion'd, though the jewel be but glass,
That with a world not often over-nice
Ranks as a virtue, and is yet a vice,
Or rather a gross compound, justly tried,
Of envy, hatred, jealousy, and pride,
Contributes most perhaps to enhance their fame,
And emulation is its specious name.
Boys once on fire with that contentious zeal
Feel all the rage that female rivals feel,
The prize of beauty in a woman's eyes
Not brighter than in theirs the scholar's prize.
The spirit of that competition burns
With all varieties of ill by turns,
Each vainly magnifies his own success,
Resents his fellow's, wishes it were less,
Exults in his miscarriage if he fail,
Deems his reward too great if he prevail,
And labours to surpass him day and night,
Less for improvement, than to tickle spite.
The spur is powerful, and I grant its force;
It pricks the genius forward in its course,
Allows short time for play, and none for sloth,
And felt alike by each, advances both,
But judge where so much evil intervenes,
The end, though plausible, not worth the means.
Weigh, for a moment, classical desert
Against a heart depraved and temper hurt,

Hurt too perhaps for life, for early wrong
Done to the nobler part, affects it long,
And you are staunch indeed in learning's cause,
If you can crown a discipline that draws
Such mischiefs after it, with much applause.
Connexion form'd for interest, and endear'd
By selfish views, thus censured and cashier'd,
And emulation, as engendering hate,
Doom'd to a no less ignominious fate,
The props of such proud seminaries fall,
The JACHIN and the BOAZ of them all.
Great schools rejected then, as those that swell
Beyond a size that can be managed well,
Shall royal institutions miss the bays,
And small academies win all the praise?
Force not my drift beyond its just intent,
I praise a school as Pope a government;
So take my judgement in his language dress'd,
"Whate'er is best administer'd, is best."
Few boys are born with talents that excel,
But all are capable of living well.
Then ask not, whether limited or large,
But, watch they strictly or neglect their charge?
If anxious only that their boys may *learn*,
While *Morals* languish, a despised concern,
The great and small deserve one common blame,
Different in size, but in effect the same.
Much zeal in virtue's cause all teachers boast,
Though motives of mere lucre sway the most.
Therefore in towns and cities they abound,
For there, the game they seek is easiest found,
Though there, in spite of all that care can do,
Traps to catch youth are most abundant too.
If shrewd, and of a well-constructed brain,
Keen in pursuit, and vigorous to retain,
Your son come forth a prodigy of skill,
As wheresoever taught, so form'd, he will,
The pædagogue, with self-complacent air,
Claims more than half the praise as his due share;
But if with all his genius he betray,
Not more intelligent, than loose and gay,

Such vicious habits as disgrace his name,
Threaten his health, his fortune, and his fame,
Though want of due restraint alone have bred
The symptoms that you see with so much dread,
Unenvied there, he may sustain alone
The whole reproach, the fault was all his own.
  Oh 'tis a sight to be with joy perused
By all whom sentiment has not abused,
New-fangled sentiment, the boasted grace
Of those who never feel in the right place,
A sight surpassed by none that we can show,
Though Vestris on one leg still shine below,
A father blest with an ingenuous son,
Father and friend and tutor all in one.
How? turn again to tales long since forgot,
Æsop and Phædrus and the rest?—why not?
He will not blush that has a father's heart,
To take in childish plays a childish part,
But bends his sturdy back to any toy
That youth takes pleasure in, to please his boy;
Then why resign into a stranger's hand
A task as much within your own command,
That God and nature and your interest too
Seem with one voice to delegate to you?
Why hire a lodging in a house unknown
For one whose tenderest thoughts all hover round your
    own?
This second weaning, needless as it is,
How does it lacerate both your heart and his!
The indented stick that loses day by day
Notch after notch, till all are smooth'd away,
Bears witness long ere his dismission come,
With what intense desire he wants his home.
But though the joys he hopes beneath your roof
Bid fair enough to answer in the proof,
Harmless and safe and natural as they are,
A disappointment waits him even there:
Arrived he feels an unexpected change,
He blushes, hangs his head, is shy and strange,
No longer takes, as once, with fearless ease
His favourite stand between his father's knees,

But seeks the corner of some distant seat,
And eyes the door, and watches a retreat,
And least familiar where he should be most,
Feels all his happiest privileges lost.
Alas, poor boy!—the natural effect
Of love by absence chilled into respect.
Say, what accomplishments at school acquired
Brings he to sweeten fruits so undesired?
Thou well deservest an alienated son,
Unless thy conscious heart acknowledge—none;
None that in thy domestic snug recess,
He had not made his own with more address,
Though some perhaps that shock thy feeling mind,
And better never learn'd, or left behind.
Add too, that thus estranged thou canst obtain
By no kind arts his confidence again,
That here begins with most that long complaint
Of filial frankness lost, and love grown faint,
Which, oft neglected in life's waning years,
A parent pours into regardless ears.
  Like caterpillars dangling under trees
By slender threads, and swinging in the breeze,
Which filthily bewray and sore disgrace
The boughs in which are bred the unseemly race,
While every worm industriously weaves
And winds his web about the rivell'd leaves;
So numerous are the follies that annoy
The mind and heart of every sprightly boy,
Imaginations noxious and perverse,
Which admonition can alone disperse.
The encroaching nuisance asks a faithful hand,
Patient, affectionate, of high command,
To check the procreation of a breed
Sure to exhaust the plant on which they feed.
'Tis not enough that Greek or Roman page
At stated hours his freakish thoughts engage,
Even in his pastimes he requires a friend
To warn, and teach him safely to unbend,
O'er all his pleasures gently to preside,
Watch his emotions and controul their tide,

And levying thus, and with an easy sway,
A tax of profit from his very play,
To impress a value not to be erased
On moments squander'd else, and running all to waste.
And seems it nothing in a father's eye
That unimproved those many moments fly?
And is he well content, his son should find
No nourishment to feed his growing mind
But conjugated verbs, and nouns declined?
For such is all the mental food purvey'd
By public hackneys in the schooling trade,
Who feed a pupil's intellect with store
Of syntax truly, but with little more,
Dismiss their cares when they dismiss their flock,
Machines themselves, and govern'd by a clock.
Perhaps a father blest with any brains
Would deem it no abuse or waste of pains,
To improve this diet at no great expense,
With savoury truth and wholesome common sense,
To lead his son for prospects of delight
To some not steep though philosophic height,
Thence to exhibit to his wondering eyes
Yon circling worlds, their distance, and their size,
The moons of Jove and Saturn's belted ball,
And the harmonious order of them all;
To show him in an insect or a flower
Such microscopic proofs of skill and power,
As hid from ages past, God now displays
To combat Atheists with in modern days;
To spread the earth before him, and commend,
With designation of the finger's end,
Its various parts to his attentive note,
Thus bringing home to him the most remote;
To teach his heart to glow with generous flame
Caught from the deeds of men of ancient fame,
And more than all with commendation due
To set some living worthy in his view,
Whose fair example may at once inspire
A wish to copy what he must admire.
Such knowledge gain'd betimes, and which appears,
Though solid, not too weighty for his years,

Sweet in itself, and not forbidding sport,
When health demands it, of athletic sort,
Would make him what some lovely boys have been,
And more than one perhaps that I have seen,
An evidence and reprehension both
Of the mere school-boy's lean and tardy growth.
  Art thou a man professionally tied,
With all thy faculties elsewhere applied
Too busy to intend a meaner care
Than how to enrich thyself, and next, thine heir;
Or art thou (as though rich, perhaps thou art,)
But poor in knowledge, having none to impart,—
Behold that figure, neat, though plainly clad,
His sprightly mingled with a shade of sad,
Not of a nimble tongue, though now and then
Heard to articulate like other men,
No jester, and yet lively in discourse,
His phrase well chosen, clear, and full of force,
And his address, if not quite French in ease,
Not English stiff, but frank and form'd to please,
Low in the world because he scorns its arts,
A man of letters, manners, morals, parts,
Unpatronized, and therefore little known,
Wise for himself and his few friends alone,
In him, thy well-appointed proxy see,
Armed for a work too difficult for thee,
Prepared by taste, by learning, and true worth,
To form thy son, to strike his genius forth,
Beneath thy roof, beneath thine eye to prove
The force of discipline when back'd by love,
To double all thy pleasure in thy child,
His mind informed, his morals undefiled.
Safe under such a wing, the boy shall show
No spots contracted among grooms below,
Nor taint his speech with meannesses design'd
By footman Tom for witty and refined.
There,—in his commerce with the liveried herd
Lurks the contagion chiefly to be fear'd.
For since (so fashion dictates) all who claim
An higher than a mere plebeian fame,

Find it expedient, come what mischief may,
To entertain a thief or two in pay,
And they that can afford the expense of more,
Some half a dozen, and some half a score,
Great cause occurs to save him from a band
So sure to spoil him, and so near at hand,
A point secured, if once he be supplied
With some such Mentor always at his side.
Are such men rare? perhaps they would abound
Were occupation easier to be found,
Were education, else so sure to fail,
Conducted on a manageable scale,
And schools that have outlived all just esteem,
Exchanged for the secure domestic scheme.
But having found him, be thou duke or earl,
Show thou hast sense enough to prize the pearl,
And as thou wouldst the advancement of thine heir
In all good faculties beneath his care,
Respect, as is but rational and just,
A man deem'd worthy of so dear a trust.
Despised by thee, what more can he expect
From youthful folly, than the same neglect?
A flat and fatal negative obtains
That instant, upon all his future pains;
His lessons tire, his mild rebukes offend,
And all the instructions of thy son's best friend
Are a stream choaked, or trickling to no end.
Doom him not then to solitary meals,
But recollect that he has sense, and feels,
And, that possessor of a soul refined,
An upright heart and cultivated mind,
His post not mean, his talents not unknown,
He deems it hard to vegetate alone.
And if admitted at thy board he sit,
Account him no just mark for idle wit,
Offend not him whom modesty restrains
From repartee, with jokes that he disdains,
Much less transfix his feelings with an oath,
Nor frown, unless he vanish with the cloth,—
And trust me, his utility may reach
To more than he is hired or bound to teach,

Much trash unutter'd and some ills undone,
Through reverence of the censor of thy son.
  But if thy table be indeed unclean,
Foul with excess, and with discourse obscene,
And thou a wretch, whom, following her old plan,
The world accounts an honourable man,
Because forsooth thy courage has been tried,
And stood the test, perhaps on the wrong side,
Though thou hadst never grace enough to prove
That any thing but vice could win thy love;
Or hast thou a polite, card-playing wife,
Chained to the routs that she frequents, for life,
Who, just when industry begins to snore,
Flies, wing'd with joy, to some coach-crowded door,
And thrice in every winter throngs thine own
With half the chariots and sedans in town,
Thyself meanwhile e'en shifting as thou mayst,
Not very sober though, nor very chaste;
Or is thine house, though less superb thy rank,
If not a scene of pleasure, a mere blank,
And thou at best, and in thy soberest mood,
A trifler, vain, and empty of all good?
Though mercy for thyself thou canst have none,
Hear nature plead, show mercy to thy son.
Saved from his home, where every day brings forth
Some mischief fatal to his future worth,
Find him a better in a distant spot,
Within some pious pastor's humble cot,
Where vile example (yours I chiefly mean,
The most seducing and the oftenest seen,)
May never more be stamp'd upon his breast,
Not yet perhaps incurably impress'd.
Where early rest makes early rising sure,
Disease or comes not, or finds easy cure,
Prevented much by diet neat and plain,
Or if it enter, soon starved out again.
Where all the attention of his faithful host
Discreetly limited to two at most,
May raise such fruits as shall reward his care,
And not at last evaporate in air.

Where stillness aiding study, and his mind
Serene, and to his duties much inclined,
Not occupied in day-dreams, as at home,
Of pleasures past or follies yet to come,
His virtuous toil may terminate at last
In settled habit and decided taste.
But whom do I advise? the fashion-led,
The incorrigibly wrong, the deaf, the dead,
Whom care and cool deliberation suit
Not better much than spectacles a brute;
Who if their sons some slight tuition share,
Deem it of no great moment, whose, or where,
Too proud to adopt the thoughts of one unknown,
And much too gay to have any of their own.
But courage, man! methought the Muse replied,
Mankind are various, and the world is wide;
The ostrich, silliest of the feather'd kind,
And form'd of God without a parent's mind,
Commits her eggs, incautious, to the dust,
Forgetful that the foot may crush the trust;
And while on public nurseries they rely,
Not knowing, and too oft not caring why,
Irrational in what they thus prefer,
No few, that would seem wise, resemble her,
But all are not alike. Thy warning voice
May here and there prevent erroneous choice,
And some perhaps, who, busy as they are,
Yet make their progeny their dearest care,
Whose hearts will ache once told what ills may reach
Their offspring left upon so wild a beach,
Will need no stress of argument to enforce
The expedience of a less adventurous course.
The rest will slight thy counsel, or condemn;
But *they* have human feelings. Turn to *them*.
To you then, tenants of life's middle state,
Securely placed between the small and great,
Whose character, yet undebauch'd, retains
Two thirds of all the virtue that remains,
Who wise yourselves desire your sons should learn
Your wisdom and your ways—to you I turn.

Look round you on a world perversely blind,
See what contempt is fallen on human kind;
See wealth abused, and dignities misplaced,
Great titles, offices, and trusts disgraced,
Long lines of ancestry renown'd of old,
Their noble qualities all quench'd and cold;
See Bedlam's closeted and handcuff'd charge
Surpass'd in frenzy by the mad at large;
See great commanders making war a trade,
Great lawyers, lawyers without study made,
Churchmen, in whose esteem their blest employ
Is odious, and their wages all their joy,
Who far enough from furnishing their shelves
With gospel lore, turn infidels themselves;
See womanhood despised, and manhood shamed
With infamy too nauseous to be named,
Fops at all corners, lady-like in mien,
Civeted fellows, smelt ere they are seen,
Else coarse and rude in manners, and their tongue
On fire with curses and with nonsense hung,
Now flush'd with drunkenness, now with whoredom pale,
Their breath a sample of last night's regale;
See volunteers in all the vilest arts
Men well endowed, of honourable parts,
Design'd by nature wise, but self-made fools;
All these, and more like these, were bred at schools.
And if it chance, as sometimes chance it will,
That though school bred, the boy be virtuous still,
Such rare exceptions shining in the dark,
Prove rather than impeach the just remark,
As here and there a twinkling star descried
Serves but to show how black is all beside.
Now look on him whose very voice in tone
Just echoes thine, whose features are thine own,
And stroke his polish'd cheek of purest red,
And lay thine hand upon his flaxen head,
And say, my boy, the unwelcome hour is come,
When thou, transplanted from thy genial home,
Must find a colder soil and bleaker air,
And trust for safety to a stranger's care;

What character, what turn thou wilt assume
From constant converse with I know not whom,
Who there will court thy friendship, with what views,
And, artless as thou art, whom thou wilt chuse,
Though much depends on what thy choice shall be,
Is all chance-medley and unknown to me.
Canst thou, the tear just trembling on thy lids,
And while the dreadful risk foreseen, forbids,
Free too, and under no constraining force,
Unless the sway of custom warp thy course,
Lay such a stake upon the losing side,
Merely to gratify so blind a guide?
Thou canst not: Nature pulling at thine heart
Condemns the unfatherly, the imprudent part.
Thou wouldst not, deaf to Nature's tenderest plea,
Turn him adrift upon a rolling sea,
Nor say, *go thither*, conscious that there lay
A brood of asps, or quicksands in his way;
Then only govern'd by the self-same rule
Of natural pity, send him not to school.
No!—Guard him better: Is he not thine own,
Thyself in miniature, thy flesh, thy bone?
And hopest thou not ('tis every father's hope)
That since thy strength must with thy years elope,
And thou wilt need some comfort to assuage
Health's last farewell, a staff of thine old age,
That then, in recompense of all thy cares,
Thy child shall show respect to thy grey hairs,
Befriend thee, of all other friends bereft,
And give thy life its only cordial left?
Aware then how much danger intervenes,
To compass that good end, forecast the means.
His heart, now passive, yields to thy command;
Secure it thine. Its key is in thine hand.
If thou desert thy charge and throw it wide,
Nor heed what guests there enter and abide,
Complain not if attachments lewd and base
Supplant thee in it, and usurp thy place.
But if thou guard its secret chambers sure
From vicious inmates and delights impure,

Either his gratitude shall hold him fast,
And keep him warm and filial to the last,
Or if he prove unkind, (as who can say
But being man, and therefore frail, he may,)
One comfort yet shall cheer thine aged heart,
Howe'er he slight thee, thou hast done thy part.
  Oh barbarous! wouldst thou with a Gothic hand
Pull down the schools—what!—all the schools i' the land?
Or throw them up to livery-nags and grooms?
Or turn them into shops and auction rooms?
—A captious question, Sir, and yours is one,
Deserves an answer similar, or none.
Wouldst thou, possessor of a flock, employ
(Apprized that he is such) a careless boy,
And feed him well, and give him handsome pay,
Merely to sleep, and let them run astray?
Survey our schools and colleges, and see
A sight not much unlike my simile.
From education, as the leading cause,
The public character its colour draws,
Thence the prevailing manners take their cast,
Extravagant or sober, loose or chaste.
And though I would not advertise them yet,
Nor write on each—*This Building to be let*,
Unless the world were all prepared to embrace
A plan well worthy to supply their place,
Yet backward as they are, and long have been,
To cultivate and keep the MORALS clean,
(Forgive the crime) I wish them, I confess,
Or better managed, or encouraged less.

THE

DIVERTING HISTORY

OF

JOHN GILPIN,

SHOWING HOW HE WENT FARTHER THAN HE INTENDED, AND CAME SAFE HOME AGAIN.

JOHN GILPIN was a citizen
  Of credit and renown,
A train-band Captain eke was he
  Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
  —Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
  No holiday have seen.

To-morrow is our wedding-day,
  And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton,
  All in a chaise and pair.

My sister and my sister's child,
  Myself and children three
Will fill the chaise, so you must ride
  On horseback after we.

He soon replied—I do admire
  Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
  Therefore it shall be done.

I am a linen-draper bold,
  As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the Callender
  Will lend his horse to go.

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin—That's well said;
  And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnish'd with our own,
  Which is both bright and clear.

John Gilpin kiss'd his loving wife,
  O'erjoyed was he to find
That though on pleasure she was bent,
  She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
  But yet was not allow'd
To drive up to the door, lest all
  Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stay'd,
  Where they did all get in,
Six precious souls, and all agog
  To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheel,
  Were never folk so glad,
The stones did rattle underneath
  As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side
  Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got in haste to ride,
  But soon came down again.

For saddle-tree scarce reach'd had he,
  His journey to begin,
When turning round his head he saw
  Three customers come in.

So down he came, for loss of time
  Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
  Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
  Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came down stairs,
  "The wine is left behind."

Good lack! quoth he, yet bring it me,
  My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword
  When I do exercise.

Now Mistress Gilpin, careful soul,
  Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
  And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
  Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side
  To make his balance true.

Then over all, that he might be
  Equipped from top to toe,
His long red cloak well brush'd and neat
  He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
  Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones
  With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road
  Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
  Which galled him in his seat.

So, Fair and softly, John he cried,
  But John he cried in vain,
That trot became a gallop soon
  In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
  Who cannot sit upright,
He grasp'd the mane with both his hands
  And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
  Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
  Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin neck or nought,
  Away went hat and wig,
He little dreamt when he set out
  Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
  Like streamer long and gay,
Till loop and button failing both,
  At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
  The bottles he had slung,
A bottle swinging at each side
  As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children scream'd,
  Up flew the windows all,
And every soul cried out, Well done!
  As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he;
  His fame soon spread around—
He carries weight, he rides a race,
  'Tis for a thousand pound.

And still as fast as he drew near,
  'Twas wonderful to view
How in a trice the turnpike-men
  Their gates wide open threw.

And now as he went bowing down
  His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
  Were shatter'd at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road
  Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
  As they had basted been.

But still he seem'd to carry weight,
  With leathern girdle braced,
For all might see the bottle necks
  Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
  These gambols he did play,
And till he came unto the Wash
  Of Edmonton so gay.

And there he threw the Wash about
  On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
  Or a wild-goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife
  From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wondering much
  To see how he did ride.

Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here's the house—
  They all at once did cry,
The dinner waits and we are tired:
  Said Gilpin—so am I.

But yet his horse was not a whit
  Inclined to tarry there,
For why? his owner had a house
  Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew
  Shot by an archer strong,
So did he fly—which brings me to
  The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin, out of breath,
  And sore against his will,
Till at his friend's the Callender's
  His horse at last stood still.

The Callender amazed to see
  His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
  And thus accosted him—

What news? what news? your tidings tell,
  Tell me you must and shall—
Say why bare-headed you are come,
  Or why you come at all?

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit
  And loved a timely joke,
And thus unto the Callender
  In merry guise he spoke—

I came because your horse would come;
  And if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here,
  They are upon the road.

The Callender, right glad to find
  His friend in merry pin,
Return'd him not a single word,
  But to the house went in.

Whence straight he came with hat and wig,
  A wig that flow'd behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
  Each comely in its kind.

He held them up and in his turn
  Thus show'd his ready wit,
—My head is twice as big as yours,
  They therefore needs must fit.

But let me scrape the dirt away
  That hangs upon your face;
And stop and eat, for well you may
  Be in a hungry case.

Said John—It is my wedding-day,
  And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton
  And I should dine at Ware.

So turning to his horse, he said,
  I am in haste to dine,
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
  You shall go back for mine.

Ah luckless speech, and bootless boast!
  For which he paid full dear,
For while he spake a braying ass
  Did sing most loud and clear.

Whereat his horse did snort as he
  Had heard a lion roar,
And gallop'd off with all his might
  As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
  Went Gilpin's hat and wig;
He lost them sooner than at first,
  For why? they were too big.

Now Mistress Gilpin, when she saw
  Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
  She pull'd out half a crown;

And thus unto the youth she said
  That drove them to the Bell,
This shall be yours when you bring back
  My husband safe and well.

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
  John coming back amain,
Whom in a trice he tried to stop
  By catching at his rein.

But not performing what he meant,
  And gladly would have done,
The frighted steed he frighted more,
  And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
  Went post-boy at his heels,
The post-boy's horse right glad to miss
  The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road
  Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With post-boy scampering in the rear,
  They raised the hue and cry.

Stop thief, stop thief—a highwayman!
  Not one of them was mute,
And all and each that pass'd that way
  Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
  Flew open in short space,
The toll-men thinking as before
  That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too,
For he got first to town,
Nor stopp'd till where he had got up
He did again get down.

Now let us sing, Long live the king,
And Gilpin long live he,
And when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see!

THE DISTRESSED TRAVELLERS;

OR,

LABOUR IN VAIN.

An excellent New Song, to a Tune never sung before.

1.

I SING of a journey to Clifton,
We would have perform'd if we could,
Without cart or barrow to lift on
Poor Mary and me through the mud;
Slee sla slud,
Stuck in the mud,
Oh it is pretty to wade through a flood!

2.

So away we went, slipping and sliding,
Hop, hop, *a la mode de deux* frogs.
'Tis near as good walking as riding,
When ladies are dress'd in their clogs.
Wheels, no doubt,
Go briskly about,
But they clatter and rattle, and make such a rout!

3.

SHE.

Well! now I protest it is charming;
How finely the weather improves!
That cloud, though, is rather alarming;
How slowly and stately it moves!

HE.

Pshaw! never mind;
'Tis not in the wind;
We are travelling south, and shall leave it behind.

4.

SHE.

I am glad we are come for an airing,
For folks may be pounded and penn'd,
Until they grow rusty, not caring
To stir half a mile to an end.

HE.

The longer we stay,
The longer we may;
It's a folly to think about weather or way.

5.

SHE.

But now I begin to be frighted;
If I fall, what a way I should roll!
I am glad that the bridge was indicted.—
Stop! stop! I am sunk in a hole!

HE.

Nay, never care!
'Tis a common affair;
You'll not be the last that will set a foot there.

6.

SHE.

Let me breathe now a little, and ponder
On what it were better to do.
That terrible lane, I see yonder,
I think we shall never get through!

HE.

So think I;
But, by the bye,
We never shall know, if we never should try.

7.

SHE.

But should we get there, how shall we get home?
What a terrible deal of bad road we have past,
Slipping and sliding; and if we should come
To a difficult stile, I am ruined at last.
Oh this lane!
Now it is plain
That struggling and striving is labour in vain.

8.

HE.

Stick fast there, while I go and look.

SHE.

Don't go away, for fear I should fall!

HE.

I have examined it every nook,
And what you have here is a sample of all.
Come, wheel round;
The dirt we have found
Would be an estate at a farthing a pound.

9.

Now, Sister Anne, the guitar you must take;
Set it, and sing it, and make it a song.
I have varied the verse for variety sake,
And cut it off short, because it was long.
'Tis hobbling and lame,
Which critics won't blame,
For the sense and the sound, they say, should be the same.

A TALE,

FOUNDED ON A FACT, WHICH HAPPENED IN JANUARY, 1779.

WHERE Humber pours his rich commercial stream,
There dwelt a wretch, who breathed but to blaspheme.
In subterraneous caves his life he led,
Black as the mine, in which he wrought for bread.

When on a day, emerging from the deep,
A sabbath-day, (such sabbaths thousands keep!)
The wages of his weekly toil he bore
To buy a cock—whose blood might win him more;
As if the noblest of the feather'd kind
Were but for battle and for death design'd;
As if the consecrated hours were meant
For sport, to minds on cruelty intent.
It chanced, (such chances Providence obey,)
He met a fellow-labourer on the way,
Whose heart the same desires had once inflamed,
But now the savage temper was reclaim'd.
Persuasion on his lips had taken place;
For all plead well who plead the cause of grace.
His iron-heart with Scripture he assail'd,
Woo'd him to hear a sermon, and prevail'd.
His faithful bow the mighty preacher drew,
Swift as the lightning-glimpse the arrow flew.
He wept; he trembled; cast his eyes around,
To find a worse than he; but none he found.
He felt his sins, and wonder'd he should feel.
Grace made the wound, and grace alone could heal.
  Now farewell oaths, and blasphemies, and lies!
He quits the sinner's for the martyr's prize.
That holy day was wash'd with many a tear,
Gilded with hope, yet shaded too by fear.
The next his swarthy brethren of the mine
Learn'd by his alter'd speech, the change divine,
Laugh'd when they should have wept, and swore the day
Was nigh when he would swear as fast as they.
"No," said the penitent: "such words shall share
This breath no more; devoted now to prayer.
O! if thou seest, (thine eye the future sees,)
That I shall yet again blaspheme, like these,
Now strike me to the ground, on which I kneel,
Ere yet this heart relapses into steel;
Now take me to that Heaven I once defied,
Thy presence, thy embrace!"—He spoke, and died!

TO THE REV. MR. NEWTON,

ON HIS RETURN FROM RAMSGATE.

Oct. 1780.

That ocean you have late survey'd,
  Those rocks I too have seen ;
But I, afflicted and dismay'd,
  You tranquil and serene.

You from the flood-controlling steep
  Saw stretch'd before your view,
With conscious joy, the threatening deep,
  No longer such to you.

To me, the waves that ceaseless broke
  Upon the dangerous coast,
Hoarsely and ominously spoke
  Of all my treasure lost.

Your sea of troubles you have past,
  And found the peaceful shore ;
I, tempest-toss'd, and wreck'd at last,
  Come home to port no more.

LOVE ABUSED.

What is there in the vale of life
Half so delightful as a wife,
When friendship, love, and peace combine
To stamp the marriage bond divine ?
The stream of pure and genuine love
Derives its current from above ;
And earth a second Eden shows,
Where'er the healing water flows ;
But ah, if from the dikes and drains
Of sensual Nature's feverish veins,
Lust, like a lawless headstrong flood,
Impregnated with ooze and mud,
Descending fast on every side
Once mingles with the sacred tide,

Farewell the soul-enlivening scene!
The banks that wore a smiling green,
With rank defilement overspread,
Bewail their flowery beauties dead;
The stream polluted, dark, and dull,
Diffused into a Stygian pool,
Through life's last melancholy years
Is fed with ever-flowing tears,
Complaints supply the zephyr's part,
And sighs that heave a breaking heart.

A POETICAL EPISTLE TO LADY AUSTEN,

Dec. 17, 1781.

Dear Anna—between friend and friend,
Prose answers every common end;
Serves, in a plain and homely way,
To express the occurrence of the day;
Our health, the weather, and the news,
What walks we take, what books we choose,
And all the floating thoughts we find
Upon the surface of the mind.
  But when a poet takes the pen,
Far more alive than other men,
He feels a gentle tingling come
Down to his finger and his thumb,
Derived from nature's noblest part,
The centre of a glowing heart:
And this is what the world, who knows
No flights above the pitch of prose,
His more sublime vagaries slighting,
Denominates an itch for writing.
No wonder I, who scribble rhyme
To catch the triflers of the time,
And tell them truths divine and clear,
Which, couch'd in prose, they will not hear;
Who labour hard to allure and draw
The loiterers I never saw,

Should feel that itching and that tingling
With all my purpose intermingling,
To your intrinsic merit true,
When call'd to address myself to you.
  Mysterious are His ways, whose power
Brings forth that unexpected hour,
When minds, that never met before,
Shall meet, unite, and part no more:
It is the' allotment of the skies,
The hand of the Supremely Wise,
That guides and governs our affections,
And plans and orders our connexions:
Directs us in our distant road,
And marks the bounds of our abode.
Thus we were settled when you found us,
Peasants and children all around us,
Not dreaming of so dear a friend,
Deep in the abyss of Silver-End[1].
Thus Martha, even against her will,
Perch'd on the top of yonder hill;
And you, though you must needs prefer
The fairer scenes of sweet Sancerre[2],
Are come from distant Loire, to choose
A cottage on the banks of Ouse.
This page of Providence quite new,
And now just opening to our view,
Employs our present thoughts and pains
To guess, and spell, what it contains:
But day by day, and year by year,
Will make the dark enigma clear;
And furnish us, perhaps, at last,
Like other scenes already past,
With proof, that we, and our affairs,
Are part of a Jehovah's cares:
For God unfolds, by slow degrees,
The purport of his deep decrees;
Sheds every hour a clearer light
In aid of our defective sight;

[1] An obscure part of Olney, adjoining to the residence of Cowper, which faced the market-place.
[2] Lady Austen's residence in France.

And spreads, at length, before the soul
A beautiful and perfect whole,
Which busy man's inventive brain
Toils to anticipate, in vain.
  Say, Anna, had you never known
The beauties of a rose full blown,
Could you, though luminous your eye,
By looking on the bud descry,
Or guess, with a prophetic power,
The future splendour of the flower?
Just so, the Omnipotent, who turns
The system of a world's concerns,
From mere minutiæ can educe
Events of most important use,
And bid a dawning sky display
The blaze of a meridian day.
The works of man tend, one and all,
As needs they must, from great to small;
And vanity absorbs at length
The monuments of human strength.
But who can tell how vast the plan
Which this day's incident began?
Too small, perhaps, the slight occasion
For our dim-sighted observation;
It pass'd unnoticed, as the bird
That cleaves the yielding air unheard,
And yet may prove, when understood,
An harbinger of endless good.
  Not that I deem, or mean to call
Friendship a blessing cheap or small;
But merely to remark, that ours,
Like some of nature's sweetest flowers,
Rose from a seed of tiny size,
That seem'd to promise no such prize;
A transient visit intervening,
And made almost without a meaning,
(Hardly the effect of inclination,
Much less of pleasing expectation,)
Produced a friendship, then begun,
That has cemented us in one;

And placed it in our power to prove,
By long fidelity and love,
That Solomon has wisely spoken,—
"A threefold cord is not soon broken."

TO THE REV. MR. NEWTON,

RECTOR OF ST. MARY WOOLNOTH,

MAY 28, 1782.

SAYS the Pipe to the Snuff-box, I can't understand
What the ladies and gentlemen see in your face,
That you are in fashion all over the land,
And I am so much fallen into disgrace.

Do but see what a pretty contemplative air
I give to the company,—pray do but note 'em,—
You would think that the wise men of Greece were all there,
Or, at least, would suppose them the wise men of Gotham.

My breath is as sweet as the breath of blown roses,
While you are a nuisance where'er you appear;
There is nothing but snivelling and blowing of noses,
Such a noise as turns any man's stomach to hear.

Then lifting his lid in a delicate way,
And opening his mouth with a smile quite engaging,
The Box in reply was heard plainly to say,
What a silly dispute is this we are waging!

If you have a little of merit to claim,
You may thank the sweet-smelling Virginian weed;
And I, if I seem to deserve any blame,
The before-mentioned drug in apology plead.

Thus neither the praise nor the blame is our own,
No room for a sneer, much less a *cachinnus*;
We are vehicles, not of tobacco alone,
But of any thing else they may choose to put in us.

THE COLUBRIAD.

1782.

CLOSE by the threshold of a door nail'd fast
Three kittens sat; each kitten look'd aghast;
I passing swift and inattentive by,
At the three kittens cast a careless eye,
Not much concern'd to know what they did there,
Not deeming kittens worth a poet's care.
But presently a loud and furious hiss
Caused me to stop and to exclaim "What's this?"
When lo! upon the threshold met my view,
With head erect, and eyes of fiery hue,
A viper, long as Count de Grasse's queue.
Forth from his head his forked tongue he throws,
Darting it full against a kitten's nose,
Who having never seen, in field or house,
The like, sat still and silent as a mouse;
Only projecting with attention due,
Her whisker'd face, she ask'd him, "Who are you?"
On to the hall went I, with pace not slow,
But swift as lightning, for a long Dutch hoe,
With which well arm'd I hasten'd to the spot,
To find the viper,—but I found him not;
And turning up the leaves, and shrubs around,
Found only, that he was not to be found.
But still the kittens, sitting as before,
Sat watching close the bottom of the door.
"I hope," said I, "the villain I would kill
Has slipp'd between the door and the door sill;
And if I make despatch and follow hard,
No doubt but I shall find him in the yard;"
For long ere now it should have been rehearsed,
'Twas in the garden that I found him first.
Even there I found him, there the full-grown cat
His head, with velvet paw, did gently pat,
As curious as the kittens erst had been
To learn what this phenomenon might mean,
Fill'd with heroic ardour at the sight,
And fearing every moment he would bite,

And rob our household of our only cat
That was of age to combat with a rat,
With outstretch'd hoe I slew him at the door,
And taught him NEVER TO COME THERE NO MORE.

ON FRIENDSHIP.

Amicitia nisi inter bonos esse non potest.
CICERO.

1782.

WHAT virtue can we name, or grace,
But men unqualified and base
  Will boast it their possession?
Profusion apes the noble part
Of liberality of heart,
  And dullness of discretion.

But as the gem of richest cost
Is ever counterfeited most,
  So, always, imitation
Employs the utmost skill she can
To counterfeit the faithful man,
  The friend of long duration.

Some will pronounce me too severe,
But long experience speaks me clear;
  Therefore that censure scorning,
I will proceed to mark the shelves
On which so many dash themselves,
  And give the simple warning.

Youth, unadmonish'd by a guide,
Will trust to any fair outside,—
  An error soon corrected;
For who but learns with riper years,
That man, when smoothest he appears,
  Is most to be suspected?

But here again a danger lies,
Lest, thus deluded by our eyes,
  And taking trash for treasure,
We should, when undeceived, conclude
Friendship imaginary good,
  A mere Utopian pleasure.

An acquisition rather rare
Is yet no subject of despair;
  Nor should it seem distressful,
If either on forbidden ground,
Or where it was not to be found,
  We sought it unsuccessful.

No friendship will abide the test
That stands on sordid interest
  And mean self-love erected;
Nor such as may awhile subsist
'Twixt sensualist and sensualist,
  For vicious ends connected.

Who hopes a friend, should have a heart
Himself well furnish'd for the part,
  And ready on occasion
To show the virtue that he seeks;
For 'tis an union that bespeaks
  A just reciprocation.

A fretful temper will divide
The closest knot that may be tied,
  By ceaseless sharp corrosion:
A temper passionate and fierce
May suddenly your joys disperse
  At one immense explosion.

In vain the talkative unite
With hope of permanent delight;
  The secret just committed
They drop through mere desire to prate,
Forgetting its important weight,
  And by themselves outwitted.

How bright soe'er the prospect seems,
All thoughts of friendship are but dreams,
  If envy chance to creep in;
And envious man, if you succeed,
May prove a dangerous foe indeed,
  But not a friend worth keeping.

As envy pines at good possess'd,
So jealousy looks forth distress'd,
  On good that seems approaching,
And if success his steps attend,
Discerns a rival in a friend,
  And hates him for encroaching.

Hence authors of illustrious name,
(Unless belied by common fame,)
  Are sadly prone to quarrel:
To deem the wit a friend displays
So much of loss to their own praise,
  And pluck each other's laurel.

A man renowned for repartee
Will seldom scruple to make free
  With friendship's finest feeling;
Will thrust a dagger at your breast,
And tell you 'twas a special jest,
  By way of balm for healing.

Beware of tattlers; keep your ear
Close stopt against the tales they hear,—
  Fruits of their own invention;
The separation of chief friends
Is what their kindness most intends;
  Their sport is your dissension.

Friendship that wantonly admits
A joco-serious play of wits
  In brilliant altercation,
Is union such as indicates,
Like hand-in-hand insurance plates,
  Danger of conflagration.

Some fickle creatures boast a soul
True as the needle to the pole;
  Yet shifting, like the weather,
The needle's constancy forego
For any novelty, and show
  Its variations rather.

Insensibility makes some
Unseasonably deaf and dumb
  When most you need their pity;
'Tis waiting till the tears shall fall
From Gog and Magog in Guildhall,—
  Those playthings of the city.

The great and small but rarely meet
On terms of amity complete:
  The attempt would scarce be madder,
Should any, from the bottom, hope
At one huge stride to reach the top
  Of an erected ladder.

Courtier and patriot cannot mix
Their heterogeneous politics
  Without an effervescence,
Such as of salts with lemon-juice,
But which is rarely known to induce,
  Like that, a coalescence.

Religion should extinguish strife,
And make a calm of human life:
  But even those who differ
Only on topics left at large,
How fiercely will they meet and charge!
  No combatants are stiffer.

To prove, alas! my main intent,
Needs no great cost of argument,
  No cutting and contriving;
Seeking a real friend, we seem
To adopt the chymist's golden dream
  With still less hope of thriving.

Then judge, or ere you choose your man,
As circumspectly as you can,
  And, having made election,
See that no disrespect of yours,
Such as a friend but ill endures,
  Enfeeble his affection.

It is not timber, lead and stone,
An architect requires alone,
  To finish a great building;
The palace were but half complete,
Could he by any chance forget
  The carving and the gilding.

As similarity of mind,
Or something not to be defined,
  First rivets our attention;
So, manners, decent and polite,
The same we practised at first sight,
  Must save it from declension.

The man who hails you Tom or Jack,
And proves by thumping on your back,
  His sense of your great merit,
Is such a friend, that one had need
Be very much his friend indeed,
  To pardon, or to bear it.

Some friends make this their prudent plan—
"Say little, and hear all you can;"
  Safe policy, but hateful;
So barren sands imbibe the shower,
But render neither fruit nor flower,
  Unpleasant and ungrateful.

They whisper trivial things, and small;
But, to communicate at all
  Things serious, deem improper;
Their feculence and froth they show
But keep the best contents below,
  Just like the simmering copper.

These samples (for alas! at last
These are but samples, and a taste

Of evils yet unmention'd ;)
May prove the task, a task indeed,
In which 'tis much, if we succeed,
However well-intention'd.

Pursue the theme, and you shall find
A disciplined and furnish'd mind
To be at least expedient,
And, after summing all the rest,
Religion ruling in the breast
A principal ingredient.

True friendship has, in short, a grace
More than terrestrial in its face,
That proves it Heaven-descended ;
Man's love of woman not so pure,
Nor, when sincerest, so secure
To last till life is ended.

TO AN

AFFLICTED PROTESTANT LADY IN FRANCE.

MADAM,

A STRANGER'S purpose in these lays
Is to congratulate and not to praise ;
To give the creature the Creator's due
Were sin in me, and an offence to you.
From man to man, or e'en to woman paid,
Praise is the medium of a knavish trade,
A coin by Craft for Folly's use design'd,
Spurious, and only current with the blind.
The path of sorrow, and that path alone
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown :
No traveller ever reach'd that bless'd abode,
Who found not thorns and briers in his road.
The world may dance along the flowery plain,
Cheer'd as they go by many a sprightly strain ;
Where Nature has her mossy velvet spread,
With unshod feet they yet securely tread ;
Admonish'd, scorn the caution and the friend,
Bent all on pleasure, heedless of its end.

But He, who knew what human hearts would prove,
How slow to learn the dictates of his love,
That, hard by nature and of stubborn will,
A life of ease would make them harder still,
In pity to the souls his grace design'd
To rescue from the ruins of mankind,
Call'd for a cloud to darken all their years,
And said, "Go spend them in the vale of tears!"
O balmy gales of soul-reviving air!
O salutary streams that murmur there!
These flowing from the Fount of Grace above,
Those breathed from lips of everlasting love.
The flinty soil indeed their feet annoys,
Chill blasts of trouble nip their springing joys,
An envious world will interpose its frown
To mar delights superior to its own,
And many a pang experienced still within,
Reminds them of their hated inmate, Sin;
But ills of every shape and every name,
Transform'd to blessings, miss their cruel aim;
And every moment's calm that soothes the breast
Is given in earnest of eternal rest.

Ah, be not sad, although thy lot be cast
Far from the flock, and in a boundless waste!
No shepherd's tents within thy view appear,
But the chief Shepherd even there is near;
Thy tender sorrows and thy plaintive strain
Flow in a foreign land, but not in vain;
Thy tears all issue from a source divine,
And every drop bespeaks a Saviour thine.
So once in Gideon's fleece the dews were found,
And drought on all the drooping herbs around.

THE YEARLY DISTRESS;

OR,

TITHING-TIME AT STOCK IN ESSEX.

VERSES ADDRESSED TO A COUNTRY CLERGYMAN, COMPLAINING OF THE DISAGREEABLENESS OF THE DAY ANNUALLY APPOINTED FOR RECEIVING THE DUES AT THE PARSONAGE.

COME, ponder well, for 'tis no jest,
  To laugh it would be wrong;
The troubles of a worthy priest
  The burden of my song.

This priest he merry is and blithe
  Three quarters of the year,
But oh! it cuts him like a scythe
  When tithing time draws near.

He then is full of frights and fears,
  As one at point to die,
And long before the day appears
  He heaves up many a sigh.

For then the farmers come, jog, jog,
  Along the miry road,
Each heart as heavy as a log,
  To make their payments good.

In sooth the sorrow of such days
  Is not to be express'd,
When he that takes and he that pays
  Are both alike distress'd.

Now all unwelcome at his gates
  The clumsy swains alight,
With rueful faces and bald pates;—
  He trembles at the sight.

And well he may, for well he knows
  Each bumpkin of the clan,
Instead of paying what he owes,
  Will cheat him if he can.

So in they come—each makes his leg,
  And flings his head before,
And looks as if he came to beg,
  And not to quit a score.

"And how does miss and madam do,
  The little boy and all?"
"All tight and well. And how do you,
  Good Mr. What-d'ye-call?"

The dinner comes, and down they sit:
  Were e'er such hungry folk?
There's little talking, and no wit;
  It is no time to joke.

One wipes his nose upon his sleeve,
  One spits upon the floor,
Yet not to give offence or grieve,
  Holds up the cloth before.

The punch goes round, and they are dull
  And lumpish still as ever;
Like barrels with their bellies full,
  They only weigh the heavier.

At length the busy time begins,
  "Come, neighbours, we must wag."
The money chinks, down drop their chins,
  Each lugging out his bag.

One talks of mildew and of frost,
  And one of storms and hail,
And one of pigs that he has lost
  By maggots at the tail.

Quoth one, "A rarer man than you
  In pulpit none shall hear;
But yet, methinks, to tell you true,
  You sell it plaguey dear."

Oh why were farmers made so coarse,
  Or clergy made so fine?
A kick that scarce would move a horse,
  May kill a sound divine.

Shall drench again or discompose,
But, screen'd from every storm that blows,
It boasts a splendour ever new,
Safe with protecting Montagu.
To the same patroness resort,
Secure of favour at her court,
Strong Genius, from whose forge of thought
Forms rise, to quick perfection wrought,
Which, though new-born, with vigour move,
Like Pallas, springing arm'd from Jove;
Imagination scattering round
Wild roses over furrow'd ground,
Which Labour of his frown beguile,
And teach Philosophy a smile;
Wit flashing on Religion's side,
Whose fires, to sacred truth applied,
The gem, though luminous before,
Obtrudes on human notice more,
Like sunbeams on the golden height
Of some tall temple playing bright;
Well-tutor'd Learning, from his books
Dismiss'd with grave, not haughty looks,
Their order on his shelves exact,
Not more harmonious or compact
Than that, to which he keeps confined
The various treasures of his mind;
All these to Montagu's repair,
Ambitious of a shelter there.
There Genius, Learning, Fancy, Wit,
Their ruffled plumage calm refit,
(For stormy troubles loudest roar
Around their flight who highest soar,)
And in her eye, and by her aid,
Shine safe without a fear to fade.
She thus maintains divided sway
With yon bright regent of the day;
The plume and Poet both, we know,
Their lustre to his influence owe;
And she, the works of Phœbus aiding,
Both Poet saves and plume from fading.

ON THE

DEATH OF MRS. THROCKMORTON'S BULLFINCH.

Ye Nymphs, if e'er your eyes were red
With tears o'er hapless favourites shed,
O, share Maria's grief!
Her favourite, even in his cage,
(What will not hunger's cruel rage?)
Assassin'd by a thief.

Where Rhenus strays his vines among,
The egg was laid from which he sprung,
And though by nature mute,
Or only with a whistle bless'd,
Well-taught he all the sounds express'd
Of flageolet or flute.

The honours of his ebon poll
Were brighter than the sleekest mole,
His bosom of the hue
With which Aurora decks the skies,
When piping winds shall soon arise
To sweep away the dew.

Above, below, in all the house,
Dire foe alike of bird and mouse,
No cat had leave to dwell;
And Bully's cage supported stood
On props of smoothest-shaven wood,
Large built and latticed well.

Well latticed,—but the grate, alas!
Not rough with wire of steel or brass,
For Bully's plumage sake,
But smooth with wands from Ouse's side,
With which, when neatly peel'd and dried,
The swains their baskets make.

Night veil'd the pole: all seem'd secure:
When, led by instinct sharp and sure,

Subsistence to provide,
A beast forth sallied on the scout,
Long back'd, long tail'd, with whisker'd snout,
And badger-colour'd hide.

He, entering at the study door,
Its ample area 'gan explore;
And something in the wind
Conjectured, sniffing round and round,
Better than all the books he found,
Food chiefly for the mind.

Just then, by adverse fate impress'd,
A dream disturb'd poor Bully's rest;
In sleep he seem'd to view
A rat fast clinging to the cage,
And, screaming at the sad presage,
Awoke and found it true.

For, aided both by ear and scent,
Right to his mark the monster went,—
Ah, Muse! forbear to speak
Minute the horrors that ensued;
His teeth were strong, the cage was wood,—
He left poor Bully's beak.

O, had he made that too his prey!
That beak, whence issued many a lay
Of such mellifluous tone,
Might have repaid him well, I wote,
For silencing so sweet a throat,
Fast stuck within his own.

Maria weeps,—the Muses mourn;—
So, when by Bacchanalians torn,
On Thracian Hebrus' side
The tree-enchanter Orpheus fell,
His head alone remain'd to tell
The cruel death he died.

THE ROSE.

THE rose had been wash'd, just wash'd in a shower,
Which Mary to Anna convey'd;
The plentiful moisture encumber'd the flower,
And weigh'd down its beautiful head.

The cup was all fill'd, and the leaves were all wet,
And it seem'd, to a fanciful view,
To weep for the buds it had left with regret
On the flourishing bush where it grew.

I hastily seized it, unfit as it was
For a nosegay, so dripping and drown'd,
And swinging it rudely, too rudely, alas!
I snapp'd it; it fell to the ground.

And such, I exclaim'd, is the pitiless part
Some act by the delicate mind,
Regardless of wringing and breaking a heart
Already to sorrow resign'd.

This elegant rose, had I shaken it less,
Might have bloom'd with its owner awhile;
And the tear that is wiped with a little address,
May be follow'd perhaps by a smile.

ODE TO APOLLO.

ON AN INK-GLASS ALMOST DRIED IN THE SUN.

PATRON of all those luckless brains
That, to the wrong side leaning,
Indite much metre with much pains,
And little or no meaning;

Ay, why, since oceans, rivers, streams,
That water all the nations,
Pay tribute to thy glorious beams,
In constant exhalations;

Why, stooping from the noon of day,
  Too covetous of drink,
Apollo, hast thou stolen away
  A poet's drop of ink?

Upborne into the viewless air,
  It floats a vapour now,
Impell'd through regions dense and rare,
  By all the winds that blow;

Ordain'd perhaps ere summer flies,
  Combined with millions more,
To form an Iris in the skies,
  Though black and foul before.

Illustrious drop! and happy then
  Beyond the happiest lot,
Of all that ever pass'd my pen,
  So soon to be forgot!

Phœbus, if such be thy design,
  To place it in thy bow,
Give wit, that what is left may shine
  With equal grace below.

THE POET'S NEW-YEAR'S GIFT.

TO MRS. (AFTERWARDS LADY) THROCKMORTON.

Maria! I have every good
  For thee wish'd many a time,
Both sad and in a cheerful mood,
  But never yet in rhyme.

To wish thee fairer is no need,
  More prudent, or more sprightly,
Or more ingenuous, or more freed
  From temper-flaws unsightly.

What favour then not yet possess'd
  Can I for thee require,
In wedded love already bless'd,
  To thy whole heart's desire?

None here is happy but in part;
  Full bliss is bliss divine;
There dwells some wish in every heart,
  And doubtless one in thine.

That wish, on some fair future day
  Which Fate shall brightly gild,
('Tis blameless, be it what it may,)
  I wish it all fulfill'd.

PAIRING TIME ANTICIPATED.

A FABLE.

I SHALL not ask Jean Jaques Rousseau[1],
If birds confabulate or no;
'Tis clear that they were always able
To hold discourse, at least in fable;
And e'en the child who knows no better
Than to interpret by the letter
A story of a cock and bull,
Must have a most uncommon skull.
  It chanced then on a winter's day,
But warm and bright and calm as May,
The birds, conceiving a design
To forestall sweet St. Valentine,
In many an orchard, copse, and grove
Assembled on affairs of love,
And with much twitter and much chatter
Began to agitate the matter.
At length a Bullfinch, who could boast
More years and wisdom than the most,
Entreated, opening wide his beak,
A moment's liberty to speak;
And silence publicly enjoin'd,
Delivered briefly thus his mind:

[1] It was one of the whimsical speculations of this philosopher, that all fables which ascribe reason and speech to animals, should be withheld from children, as being only vehicles of deception. But what child was ever deceived by them, or can be, against the evidence of his senses?

My friends! be cautious how ye treat
The subject upon which we meet;
I fear we shall have winter yet.
A Finch, whose tongue knew no control,
With golden wing and satin poll,
A last year's bird, who ne'er had tried
What marriage means, thus pert replied:
Methinks the gentleman, quoth she,
Opposite in the apple-tree,
By his good will would keep us single
Till yonder heaven and earth shall mingle;
Or (which is likelier to befall)
Till death exterminate us all.
I marry without more ado;
My dear Dick Redcap, what say you?
Dick heard, and tweedling, ogling, bridling,
Turning short round, strutting, and sideling,
Attested, glad, his approbation
Of an immediate conjugation.
Their sentiments so well express'd
Influenced mightily the rest;
All pair'd, and each pair built a nest.
But though the birds were thus in haste,
The leaves came on not quite so fast,
And Destiny, that sometimes bears
An aspect stern on man's affairs,
Not altogether smiled on theirs.
The wind, of late breathed gently forth,
Now shifted east, and east by north;
Bare trees and shrubs but ill, you know,
Could shelter them from rain or snow:
Stepping into their nests, they paddled,
Themselves were chill'd, their eggs were addled;
Soon every father bird and mother
Grew quarrelsome, and peck'd each other,
Parted without the least regret,
Except that they had ever met,
And learned in future to be wiser
Than to neglect a good adviser.

MORAL.

Misses! the tale that I relate
This lesson seems to carry—
Chuse not alone a proper mate,
But proper time to marry.

THE DOG AND THE WATER-LILY.

NO FABLE.

THE noon was shady, and soft airs
Swept Ouse's silent tide,
When, 'scaped from literary cares,
I wander'd on his side.

My spaniel, prettiest of his race,
And high in pedigree,
(Two nymphs[1] adorn'd with every grace
That spaniel found for me,)

Now wanton'd lost in flags and reeds,
Now starting into sight,
Pursued the swallow o'er the meads
With scarce a slower flight.

It was the time when Ouse display'd
His lilies newly blown;
Their beauties I intent survey'd,
And one I wished my own.

With cane extended far I sought
To steer it close to land:
But still the prize, though nearly caught,
Escaped my eager hand.

Beau mark'd my unsuccessful pains
With fix'd considerate face,
And puzzling set his puppy brains
To comprehend the case.

[1] Sir Robert Gunning's daughters.

But with a cherup clear and strong,
  Dispersing all his dream,
I thence withdrew, and follow'd long
  The windings of the stream.

My ramble ended, I return'd;
  Beau, trotting far before,
The floating wreath again discern'd,
  And plunging left the shore.

I saw him with that lily cropp'd
  Impatient swim to meet
My quick approach, and soon he dropp'd
  The treasure at my feet.

Charm'd with the sight, The world, I cried,
  Shall hear of this thy deed:
My dog shall mortify the pride
  Of man's superior breed;

But chief myself I will enjoin,
  Awake at duty's call,
To show a love as prompt as thine
  To Him who gives me all.

TO

THE IMMORTAL MEMORY OF THE HALIBUT,

ON WHICH I DINED THIS DAY, MONDAY, APRIL 26, 1784.

WHERE hast thou floated, in what seas pursued
Thy pastime? When wast thou an egg new spawn'd,
Lost in the immensity of ocean's waste?
Roar as they might, the overbearing winds
That rock'd the deep, thy cradle, thou wast safe—
And in thy minikin and embryo state,
Attach'd to the firm leaf of some salt weed,
Didst outlive tempests, such as wrung and rack'd
The joints of many a stout and gallant bark,
And whelm'd them in the unexplored abyss.
Indebted to no magnet and no chart,
Nor under guidance of the polar fire,

Thou wast a voyager on many coasts,
Grazing at large in meadows submarine,
Where flat Batavia just emerging peeps
Above the brine,—where Caledonia's rocks
Beat back the surge,—and where Hibernia shoots
Her wondrous causeway far into the main.
—Wherever thou hast fed, thou little thought'st,
And I not more, that I should feed on thee.
Peace, therefore, and good health, and much good fish,
To him who sent thee! and success, as oft
As it descends into the billowy gulf,
To the same drag that caught thee!—Fare thee well!
Thy lot thy brethren of the slimy fin
Would envy, could they know that thou wast doom'd
To feed a bard, and to be praised in verse.

GRATITUDE.

ADDRESSED TO LADY HESKETH.

1786.

THIS cap, that so stately appears,
  With ribbon-bound tassel on high,
Which seems by the crest that it rears
  Ambitious of brushing the sky;
This cap to my Cousin I owe,
  She gave it, and gave me beside,
Wreath'd into an elegant bow,
  The ribbon with which it is tied.

This wheel-footed studying chair,
  Contrived both for toil and repose,
Wide-elbow'd, and wadded with air,
  In which I both scribble and doze,
Bright-studded to dazzle the eyes,
  And rival in lustre of that
In which, or astronomy lies,
  Fair Cassiopeïa sat:

These carpets, so soft to the foot,
  Caledonia's traffic and pride,
O spare them, ye knights of the boot,
  Escaped from a cross-country ride!
This table and mirror within,
  Secure from collision and dust,
At which I oft shave cheek and chin,
  And periwig nicely adjust:

This moveable structure of shelves,
  For its beauty admired and its use,
And charged with octavos and twelves,
  The gayest I had to produce;
Where, flaming in scarlet and gold,
  My poems enchanted I view,
And hope, in due time, to behold
  My Iliad and Odyssey too:

This china, that decks the alcove,
  Which here people call a buffet,
But what the gods call it above,
  Has ne'er been reveal'd to us yet:
These curtains, that keep the room warm
  Or cool as the season demands,
Those stoves that for pattern and form
  Seem the labour of Mulciber's hands:

All these are not half that I owe
  To One, from our earliest youth
To me ever ready to show
  Benignity, friendship, and truth;
For time, the destroyer declared
  And foe of our perishing kind,
If even her face he has spared,
  Much less could he alter her mind.

Thus compass'd about with the goods
  And chattels of leisure and ease,
I indulge my poetical moods
  In many such fancies as these;
And fancies I fear they will seem—
  Poets' goods are not often so fine;
The poets will swear that I dream,
  When I sing of the splendour of mine.

LINES,

COMPOSED FOR A MEMORIAL OF

ASHLEY COWPER, ESQ.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS DEATH.

BY HIS NEPHEW WILLIAM OF WESTON.

JUNE, 1788.

FAREWELL! endued with all that could engage
All hearts to love thee, both in youth and age!
In prime of life, for sprightliness enroll'd
Among the gay, yet virtuous as the old;

In life's last stage, (O blessings rarely found!)
Pleasant as youth with all its blossoms crown'd!
Through every period of this changeful state
Unchanged thyself—wise, good, affectionate!

Marble may flatter, and lest this should seem
O'ercharged with praises on so dear a theme,
Although thy worth be more than half supprest,
Love *shall* be satisfied, and veil the rest.

SONG ON PEACE.

WRITTEN IN THE SUMMER OF 1783, AT THE REQUEST OF LADY AUSTEN, WHO GAVE THE SENTIMENT.

AIR—"*My fond shepherds of late,*" *&c.*

No longer I follow a sound;
  No longer a dream I pursue;
Oh happiness! not to be found,
  Unattainable treasure, adieu!

I have sought thee in splendour and dress,
  In the regions of pleasure and taste;
I have sought thee, and seem'd to possess,
  But have proved thee a vision at last.

An humble ambition and hope
  The voice of true wisdom inspires;
'Tis sufficient, if Peace be the scope,
  And the summit of all our desires.

Peace may be the lot of the mind
  That seeks it in meekness and love;
But rapture and bliss are confined
  To the glorified spirits above.

SONG.

ALSO WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF LADY AUSTEN.

AIR—"*The Lass of Pattie's Mill.*"

WHEN all within is peace,
  How nature seems to smile;
Delights that never cease,
  The live-long day beguile.
From morn to dewy eve,
  With open hand she showers
Fresh blessings to deceive,
  And soothe the silent hours.

It is content of heart
  Gives nature power to please;
The mind that feels no smart
  Enlivens all it sees,
Can make a wintry sky
  Seem bright as smiling May,
And evening's closing eye
  As peep of early day.

The vast majestic globe,
  So beauteously array'd
In nature's various robe,
  With wondrous skill display'd,
Is to a mourner's heart
  A dreary wild at best;
It flutters to depart,
  And longs to be at rest.

EPITAPH ON JOHNSON.

JANUARY, 1785.

HERE Johnson lies, a sage by all allow'd,
Whom to have bred, may well make England proud;
Whose prose was eloquence, by wisdom taught,
The graceful vehicle of virtuous thought;
Whose verse may claim, grave, masculine and strong,
Superior praise to the mere poet's song;
Who many a noble gift from Heaven possess'd,
And faith at last, alone worth all the rest.
O man, immortal by a double prize,
By fame on earth, by glory in the skies!

TO

MISS C——, ON HER BIRTHDAY.

1786.

How many between east and west,
  Disgrace their parent earth,
Whose deeds constrain us to detest
  The day that gave them birth!
Not so when Stella's natal morn
  Revolving months restore,
We can rejoice that she was born
  And wish her born once more!

THE FLATTING-MILL.

AN ILLUSTRATION.

WHEN a bar of pure silver or ingot of gold
  Is sent to be flatted or wrought into length,
It is pass'd between cylinders often, and roll'd
  In an engine of utmost mechanical strength.

Thus tortured and squeezed, at last it appears
  Like a loose heap of ribbon, a glittering show,
Like music it tinkles and rings in your ears,
  And warm'd by the pressure is all in a glow.

This process achieved, it is doom'd to sustain
  The thump after thump of a gold-beater's mallet,
And at last is of service in sickness or pain
  To cover a pill from a delicate palate.

Alas for the Poet, who dares undertake
  To urge reformation of national ill!
His head and his heart are both likely to ache
  With the double employment of mallet and mill!

If he wish to instruct, he must learn to delight,
  Smooth, ductile, and even, his fancy must flow,
Must tinkle and glitter like gold to the sight,
  And catch in its progress a sensible glow.

After all, he must beat it as thin and as fine
  As the leaf that enfolds what an invalid swallows,
For truth is unwelcome, however divine,
  And unless you adorn it, a nausea follows.

EPITAPH ON A HARE.

Here lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,
  Nor swifter greyhound follow,
Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,
  Nor ear heard huntsman's halloo;

Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,
  Who, nursed with tender care,
And to domestic bounds confined,
  Was still a wild Jack hare.

Though duly from my hand he took
  His pittance every night,
He did it with a jealous look,
  And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread,
  And milk, and oats, and straw;
Thistles, or lettuces instead,
  With sand to scour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,
  On pippins' russet peel,
And, when his juicy salads fail'd,
  Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,
  Whereon he loved to bound,
To skip and gambol like a fawn,
  And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at evening hours,
  For then he lost his fear,
But most before approaching showers,
  Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round rolling moons
  He thus saw steal away,
Dozing out all his idle noons,
  And every night at play.

I kept him for his humour's sake,
  For he would oft beguile
My heart of thoughts that made it ache,
  And force me to a smile.

But now beneath his walnut shade
  He finds his long last home,
And waits, in snug concealment laid,
  Till gentler Puss shall come.

He, still more aged, feels the shocks
  From which no care can save,
And, partner once of Tiney's box,
  Must soon partake his grave.

EPITAPHIUM ALTERUM.

Hic etiam jacet,
Qui totum novennium vixit,
Puss.
Siste paulisper,
Qui præteriturus es,
Et tecum sic reputa—
Hunc neque canis venaticus,
Nec plumbum missile,
Nec laqueus,
Nec imbres nimii,
Confecêre :
Tamen mortuus est—
Et moriar ego.

ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE.

(TO THE MARCH IN SCIPIO.)

WRITTEN WHEN THE NEWS ARRIVED.

Toll for the brave !
The brave that are no more !
All sunk beneath the wave,
Fast by their native shore !

Eight hundred of the brave,
Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel,
And laid her on her side ;

A land breeze shook the shrouds,
And she was overset ;
Down went the Royal George,
With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave !
Brave Kempenfelt is gone ;
His last sea-fight is fought ;
His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle;
  No tempest gave the shock;
She sprang no fatal leak;
  She ran upon no rock:

His sword was in its sheath;
  His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down,
  With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up,
  Once dreaded by our foes!
And mingle with our cup
  The tear that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound,
  And she may float again,
Full-charged with England's thunder,
  And plough the distant main.

But Kempenfelt is gone;
  His victories are o'er;
And he and his eight hundred
  Shall plough the wave no more.

IN SUBMERSIONEM NAVIGII, CUI GEORGIUS REGALE NOMEN, INDITUM.

Plangimus fortes. Periére fortes,
Patrium propter periêre littus
Bis quatèr centum; subitò sub alto
  Æquore mersi.

Navis, innitens lateri, jacebat,
Malus ad summas trepidabat undas,
Cum levis, funes quatiens, ad imum
  Depulit aura.

Plangimus fortes. Nimis, heu, caducam
Fortibus vitam voluêre Parcæ,
Nec sinunt ultra tibi nos recentes
  Nectere laurus.

Magne, qui nomen, licet incanorum,
Traditum ex multis atavis tulisti!
At tuos olim memorabit ævum
Omne triumphos.

Non hyems illos furibunda mersit,
Non mari in clauso scopuli latentes,
Fissa non rimis abies, nec atrox
Abstulit ensis.

Navitæ sed tum nimium jocosi
Voce fallebant hilari laborem,
Et quiescebat, calamoque dextram im-
pleverat heros.

Vos, quibus cordi est grave opus piumque,
Humidum ex alto spolium levate,
Et putrescentes sub aquis amicos
Reddite amicis!

Hi quidem (sic Dîs placuit) fuêre:
Sed ratis, nondum putris, ire possit
Rursus in bellum, Britonumque nomen
Tollere ad astra.

THE NEGRO'S COMPLAINT.

Forced from home and all its pleasures,
Afric's coast I left forlorn,
To increase the stranger's treasures,
O'er the raging billows borne.
Men from England bought and sold me,
Paid my price in paltry gold:
But, though slave they have enroll'd me,
Minds are never to be sold.

Still in thought as free as ever,
What are England's rights, I ask?
Me from my delights to sever,
Me to torture, me to task?

Fleecy locks and black complexion
  Cannot forfeit Nature's claim;
Skins may differ, but affection
  Dwells in white and black the same.

Why did all-creating Nature
  Make the plant for which we toil?
Sighs must fan it, tears must water,
  Sweat of ours must dress the soil.
Think, ye masters, iron-hearted,
  Lolling at your jovial boards,
Think how many backs have smarted
  For the sweets your cane affords.

Is there, as ye sometimes tell us,
  Is there One who reigns on high?
Has He bid you buy and sell us,
  Speaking from his throne, the sky?
Ask Him, if your knotted scourges,
  Matches, blood-extorting screws
Are the means that duty urges
  Agents of his will to use?

Hark! He answers!—Wild tornadoes
  Strewing yonder sea with wrecks,
Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,
  Are the voice with which he speaks.
He, foreseeing what vexations
  Afric's sons should undergo,
Fix'd their tyrants' habitations
  Where his whirlwinds answer—No.

By our blood in Afric wasted,
  Ere our necks received the chain;
By the miseries that we tasted,
  Crossing in your barks the main;
By our sufferings, since ye brought us
  To the man-degrading mart,
All sustain'd by patience, taught us
  Only by a broken heart!

Deem our nation brutes no longer,
  Till some reason ye shall find
Worthier of regard and stronger
  Than the colour of our kind.
Slaves of gold, whose sordid dealings
  Tarnish all your boasted powers,
Prove that you have human feelings
  Ere you proudly question ours!

PITY FOR POOR AFRICANS.

Video meliora proboque,
Deteriora sequor.——

I own I am shock'd at the purchase of slaves,
And fear those who buy them and sell them are knaves;
What I hear of their hardships, their tortures, and groans
Is almost enough to draw pity from stones.

I pity them greatly, but I must be mum,
For how could we do without sugar and rum?
Especially sugar, so needful we see;
What, give up our desserts, our coffee, and tea!

Besides, if we do, the French, Dutch, and Danes,
Will heartily thank us, no doubt, for our pains:
If we do not buy the poor creatures, they will;
And tortures and groans will be multiplied still.

If foreigners likewise would give up the trade,
Much more in behalf of your wish might be said;
But, while they get riches by purchasing blacks,
Pray tell me why we may not also go snacks?

Your scruples and arguments bring to my mind
A story so pat, you may think it is coin'd,
On purpose to answer you, out of my mint;
But I can assure you I saw it in print.

A youngster at school, more sedate than the rest,
Had once his integrity put to the test;
His comrades had plotted an orchard to rob,
And ask'd him to go and assist in the job.

He was shock'd, sir, like you, and answer'd—"Oh, no!
What! rob our good neighbour? I pray you don't go!
Besides the man's poor, his orchard's his bread:
Then think of his children, for they must be fed."

"You speak very fine, and you look very grave,
But apples we want, and apples we'll have;
If you will go with us, you shall have a share,
If not, you shall have neither apple nor pear."

They spoke, and Tom ponder'd—"I see they will go:
Poor man! what a pity to injure him so!
Poor man! I would save him his fruit if I could,
But staying behind will do him no good.

"If the matter depended alone upon me,
His apples might hang till they dropp'd from the tree;
But since they will take them, I think I'll go too:
He will lose none by me, though I get a few."

His scruples thus silenced, Tom felt more at ease,
And went with his comrades the apples to seize;
He blamed and protested, but join'd in the plan;
He shared in the plunder, but pitied the man.

THE MORNING DREAM.

'Twas in the glad season of spring,
  Asleep at the dawn of the day,
I dream'd what I cannot but sing,
  So pleasant it seem'd as I lay.
I dream'd that, on ocean afloat,
  Far hence to the westward I sail'd,
While the billows high lifted the boat,
  And the fresh-blowing breeze never fail'd.

In the steerage a woman I saw;
  Such at least was the form that she wore,
Whose beauty impress'd me with awe,
  Ne'er taught me by woman before.
She sat, and a shield at her side
  Shed light, like a sun on the waves,
And, smiling divinely, she cried—
  "I go to make freemen of slaves."

Then raising her voice to a strain
  The sweetest that ear ever heard,
She sung of the slave's broken chain
  Wherever her glory appear'd.
Some clouds, which had over us hung,
  Fled, chased by her melody clear,
And methought while she liberty sung,
  'Twas liberty only to hear.

Thus swiftly dividing the flood,
  To a slave-cultured island we came,
Where a Demon, her enemy, stood—
  Oppression his terrible name.
In his hand, as a sign of his sway,
  A scourge hung with lashes he bore,
And stood looking out for his prey
  From Africa's sorrowful shore.

But soon as approaching the land
  That goddess-like woman he view'd,
The scourge he let fall from his hand,
  With blood of his subjects imbrued.
I saw him both sicken and die,
  And the moment the monster expired,
Heard shouts that ascended the sky,
  From thousands with rapture inspired.

Awaking, how could I but muse
  At what such a dream should betide?
But soon my ear caught the glad news,
  Which served my weak thought for a guide,—
That Britannia, renown'd o'er the waves
  For the hatred she ever had shown
To the black-sceptred rulers of slaves,
  Resolves to have none of her own.

SWEET MEAT HAS SOUR SAUCE:

OR,

THE SLAVE-TRADER IN THE DUMPS.

A TRADER I am to the African shore,
But since that my trading is like to be o'er,
I'll sing you a song that you ne'er heard before,
Which nobody can deny, deny,
Which nobody can deny.

When I first heard the news it gave me a shock,
Much like what they call an electrical knock,
And now I am going to sell off my stock,
Which nobody can deny.

'Tis a curious assortment of dainty regales,
To tickle the Negroes with when the ship sails,
Fine chains for the neck, and a cat with nine tails,
Which nobody can deny.

Here's supple-jack plenty, and store of rat-tan,
That will wind itself round the sides of a man,
As close as a hoop round a bucket or can,
Which nobody can deny.

Here's padlocks and bolts, and screws for the thumbs,
That squeeze them so lovingly till the blood comes;
They sweeten the temper like comfits or plums,
Which nobody can deny.

When a Negro his head from his victuals withdraws,
And clenches his teeth and thrusts out his paws,
Here's a notable engine to open his jaws,
Which nobody can deny.

Thus going to market, we kindly prepare
A pretty black cargo of African ware,
For what they must meet with when they get there,
Which nobody can deny.

'Twould do your heart good to see 'em below
Lie flat on their backs all the way as we go,
Like sprats on a gridiron, scores in a row,
Which nobody can deny.

But ah! if in vain I have studied an art
So gainful to me, all boasting apart,
I think it will break my compassionate heart,
Which nobody can deny.

For oh! how it enters my soul like an awl!
This pity, which some people self-pity call,
Is sure the most heart-piercing pity of all,
Which nobody can deny.

So this is my song, as I told you before;
Come, buy off my stock, for I must no more
Carry Cæsars and Pompeys to Sugar-cane shore,
Which nobody can deny, deny,
Which nobody can deny.

THE VALEDICTION.

Farewell, false hearts! whose best affections fail,
Like shallow brooks which summer suns exhale;
Forgetful of the man whom once ye chose,
Cold in his cause, and careless of his woes;
I bid you both a long and last adieu!
Cold in my turn, and unconcern'd like you.
First, farewell Niger! whom, now duly proved,
I disregard as much as I have loved.
Your brain well furnished, and your tongue well taught
To press with energy your ardent thought,
Your senatorial dignity of face,
Sound sense, intrepid spirit, manly grace,
Have raised you high as talents can ascend,
Made you a peer, but spoilt you for a friend!
Pretend to all that parts have e'er acquired;
Be great, be fear'd, be envied, be admired;
To fame as lasting as the earth pretend,
But not hereafter to the name of friend!
I sent you verse, and, as your lordship knows,
Back'd with a modest sheet of humble prose,
Not to recall a promise to your mind,
Fulfill'd with ease had you been so inclined,

But to comply with feelings, and to give
Proof of an old affection still alive.
Your sullen silence serves at least to tell
Your alter'd heart; and so, my lord, farewell!
  Next, busy actor on a meaner stage,
Amusement-monger of a trifling age,
Illustrious histrionic patentee,
Terentius, once my friend, farewell to thee!
In thee some virtuous qualities combine,
To fit thee for a nobler post than thine,
Who, born a gentleman, hast stoop'd too low,
To live by buskin, sock and raree-show.
Thy schoolfellow, and partner of thy plays,
When Nichol swung the birch and twined the bays,
And having known thee bearded and full grown,
The weekly censor of a laughing town,
I thought the volume I presumed to send,
Graced with the name of a long-absent friend,
Might prove a welcome gift, and touch thine heart,
Not hard by nature, in a feeling part.
But thou it seems, (what cannot grandeur do,
Though but a dream?) art grown disdainful too;
And strutting in thy school of queens and kings,
Who fret their hour and are forgotten things,
Hast caught the cold distemper of the day,
And, like his lordship, cast thy friend away.
  Oh Friendship! cordial of the human breast!
So little felt, so fervently profess'd!
Thy blossoms deck our unsuspecting years;
The promise of delicious fruit appears:
We hug the hopes of constancy and truth,
Such is the folly of our dreaming youth;
But soon, alas! detect the rash mistake,
That sanguine inexperience loves to make;
And view with tears the expected harvest lost,
Decay'd by time, or wither'd by a frost.
Whoever undertakes a friend's great part
Should be renew'd in nature, pure in heart,
Prepared for martyrdom, and strong to prove
A thousand ways the force of genuine love.

He may be call'd to give up health and gain,
To exchange content for trouble, ease for pain,
To echo sigh for sigh, and groan for groan,
And wet his cheeks with sorrows not his own.
The heart of man, for such a task too frail,
When most relied on, is most sure to fail;
And, summon'd to partake its fellow's woe,
Starts from its office, like a broken bow.
  Votaries of business and of pleasure, prove
Faithless alike in friendship and in love.
Retired from all the circles of the gay,
And all the crowds that bustle life away,
To scenes where competition, envy, strife,
Beget no thunder-clouds to trouble life,
Let me, the charge of some good angel, find
One who has known and has escaped mankind;
Polite, yet virtuous, who has brought away
The manners, not the morals, of the day:
With him, perhaps with *her*, (for men have known
No firmer friendships than the fair have shown,)
Let me enjoy, in some unthought-of spot,
(All former friends forgiven, and forgot,)
Down to the close of life's fast fading scene,
Union of hearts, without a flaw between.
'Tis grace, 'tis bounty, and it calls for praise,
If God give health, that sunshine of our days;
And if he add, a blessing shared by few,
Content of heart, more praises still are due:—
But if he grant a friend, that boon possess'd
Indeed is treasure, and crowns all the rest;
And giving one, whose heart is in the skies,
Born from above, and made divinely wise,
He gives, what bankrupt nature never can,
Whose noblest coin is light and brittle man,
Gold, purer far than Ophir ever knew,
A soul, an image of himself, and therefore true.

ON THE QUEEN'S VISIT TO LONDON,

THE NIGHT OF THE 17TH MARCH, 1789.

When, long sequester'd from his throne,
George took his seat again,
By right of worth, not blood alone,
Entitled here to reign;

Then, Loyalty, with all his lamps
New trimm'd, a gallant show,
Chasing the darkness and the damps,
Set London in a glow.

'Twas hard to tell of streets or squares,
Which form'd the chief display,
These most resembling cluster'd stars,
Those the long milky way.

Bright shone the roofs, the domes, the spires,
And rockets flew, self-driven,
To hang their momentary fires
Amid the vault of Heaven.

So, fire with water to compare,
The ocean serves on high
Up-spouted by a whale in air,
To express unwieldy joy.

Had all the pageants of the world
In one procession join'd,
And all the banners been unfurl'd
That heralds e'er design'd;

For no such sight had England's Queen
Forsaken her retreat,
Where, George recover'd made a scene
Sweet always, doubly sweet.

Yet glad she came that night to prove,
A witness undescried,
How much the object of her love
Was loved by all beside.

Darkness the skies had mantled o'er
  In aid of her design,——
Darkness, O Queen! ne'er call'd before
  To veil a deed of thine.

On borrow'd wheels away she flies,
  Resolved to be unknown,
And gratify no curious eyes
  That night, except her own.

Arrived, a night like noon she sees,
  And hears the million hum;
As all by instinct, like the bees,
  Had known their sovereign come.

Pleased she beheld aloft pourtray'd
  On many a splendid wall,
Emblems of health, and heavenly aid,
  And George the theme of all.

Unlike the enigmatic line,
  So difficult to spell,
Which shook Belshazzar at his wine,
  The night his city fell.

Soon, watery grew her eyes and dim,
  But with a joyful tear,
None else, except in prayer for him,
  George ever drew from her.

It was a scene in every part
  Like those in fable feign'd,
And seem'd by some magician's art
  Created and sustain'd.

But other magic there, she knew,
  Had been exerted none,
To raise such wonders in her view,
  Save love of George alone.

That cordial thought her spirits cheer'd,
  And through the cumberous throng,
Not else unworthy to be fear'd,
  Convey'd her calm along.

So, ancient poets say, serene
  The sea-maid rides the waves,
And fearless of the billowy scene
  Her peaceful bosom laves.

With more than astronomic eyes
  She view'd the sparkling show;
One Georgian star adorns the skies,
  She myriads found below.

Yet let the glories of a night
  Like that, once seen, suffice;
Heaven grant us no such future sight,
  Such previous woe the price!

ANNUS MEMORABILIS. 1789.

WRITTEN IN COMMEMORATION OF HIS MAJESTY'S HAPPY RECOVERY.

I RANSACK'D, for a theme of song,
Much ancient chronicle, and long;
I read of bright embattled fields,
Of trophied helmets, spears, and shields,
Of chiefs, whose single arm could boast
Prowess to dissipate a host;
Through tomes of fable and of dream
I sought an eligible theme,
But none I found, or found them shared
Already by some happier bard.
  To modern times, with truth to guide
My busy search, I next applied;
Here cities won and fleets dispersed
Urged loud a claim to be rehearsed,
Deeds of unperishing renown,
Our father's triumphs and our own.
  Thus as the bee, from bank to bower,
Assiduous sips at every flower,
But rests on none till that be found
Where most nectareous sweets abound,
So I, from theme to theme display'd
In many a page historic stray'd,

Siege after siege, fight after fight,
Contemplating with small delight,
(For feats of sanguinary hue
Not always glitter in my view,)
Till, settling on the current year,
I found the far sought treasure near.
A theme for poetry divine,
A theme to ennoble even mine,
In memorable Eighty-nine.

The spring of eighty-nine shall be
An æra cherish'd long by me,
Which joyful I will oft record,
And thankful at my frugal board;
For then the clouds of eighty-eight,
That threaten'd England's trembling state
With loss of what she least could spare,
Her sovereign's tutelary care,
One breath of Heaven, that cried—Restore!
Chased, never to assemble more;
And far the richest crown on earth,
If valued by its wearer's worth,
The symbol of a righteous reign
Sat fast on George's brows again.

Then peace and joy again possess'd
Our Queen's long-agitated breast;
Such joy and peace as can be known
By sufferers like herself alone,
Who losing, or supposing lost,
The good on earth they valued most,
For that dear sorrow's sake forego
All hope of happiness below,
Then suddenly regain the prize,
And flash thanksgivings to the skies!

O, Queen of Albion, queen of isles!
Since all thy tears were changed to smiles,
The eyes, that never saw thee, shine
With joy not unallied to thine,
Transports not chargeable with art
Illume the land's remotest part,
And strangers to the air of courts,
Both in their toils and at their sports,

The happiness of answer'd prayers,
That gilds thy features, show in theirs.
  If they who on thy state attend,
Awe-struck, before thy presence bend,
'Tis but the natural effect
Of grandeur that ensures respect;
But she is something more than Queen
Who is beloved where never seen.

THE COCK-FIGHTER'S GARLAND.

MAY, 1789.

MUSE—hide his name of whom I sing,
Lest his surviving House thou bring
  For his sake into scorn,
Nor speak the School from which he drew
The much or little that he knew,
  Nor Place where he was born.

That such a man once was, may seem
Worthy of record, (if the theme
  Perchance may credit win,)
For proof to man, what Man may prove,
If Grace depart, and Demons move
  The source of guilt within.

This man (for since the howling wild
Disclaims him, Man he must be styled)
  Wanted no good below;
Gentle he was, if gentle birth
Could make him such; and he had worth,
  If wealth can worth bestow.

In social talk and ready jest
He shone superior at the feast,
  And qualities of mind
Illustrious in the eyes of those
Whose gay society he chose
  Possess'd of every kind.

Methinks I see him powder'd red,
With bushy locks his well-dress'd head
  Wing'd broad on either side,
The mossy rose-bud not so sweet;
His steeds superb, his carriage neat
  As luxury could provide.

Can such be cruel? Such can be
Cruel as hell, and so was he;
  A tyrant entertain'd
With barbarous sports, whose fell delight
Was to encourage mortal fight
  'Twixt birds to battle train'd.

One feather'd champion he possess'd,
His darling far beyond the rest,
  Which never knew disgrace,
Nor e'er had fought, but he made flow
The life-blood of his fiercest foe,
  The Cæsar of his race.

It chanced, at last, when, on a day,
He push'd him to the desperate fray,
  His courage droop'd, he fled.
The Master storm'd, the prize was lost,
And, instant, frantic at the cost,
  He doom'd his favourite dead.

He seized him fast, and from the pit
Flew to the kitchen, snatch'd the spit,
  And, bring me cord, he cried;
The cord was brought, and, at his word,
To that dire implement the bird
  Alive and struggling, tied.

The horrid sequel asks a veil,
And all the terrors of the tale
  That can be, shall be, sunk.—
Led by the sufferer's screams aright,
His shock'd companions view the sight,
  And him with fury drunk.

All, suppliant, beg a milder fate
For the old warrior at the grate ;
  He, deaf to pity's call,
Whirl'd round him rapid as a wheel
His culinary club of steel,
  Death menacing on all.

But vengeance hung not far remote,
For while he stretch'd his clamorous throat
  And heaven and earth defied,
Big with a curse too closely pent,
That struggled vainly for a vent,
  He totter'd, reel'd, and died.

'Tis not for us, with rash surmise,
To point the judgements of the skies ;
  But judgements plain as this,
That, sent for Man's instruction, bring
A written label on their wing,
  Tis hard to read amiss.

ON THE

BENEFIT RECEIVED BY HIS MAJESTY FROM SEA-BATHING,

IN THE YEAR 1789.

O SOVEREIGN of an isle renown'd
  For undisputed sway
Wherever o'er yon gulf profound
  Her navies wing their way ;

With juster claim she builds at length
  Her empire on the sea,
And well may boast the waves her strength
  Which strength restored to Thee.

TO MRS. THROCKMORTON,

ON HER BEAUTIFUL TRANSCRIPT OF HORACE'S ODE

AD LIBRUM SUUM.

FEBRUARY, 1790.

MARIA, could Horace have guess'd
  What honour awaited his ode
To his own little volume address'd,
  The honour which you have bestow'd,—
Who have traced it in characters here,
  So elegant, even, and neat,
He had laugh'd at the critical sneer
  Which he seems to have trembled to meet.

And sneer, if you please, he had said,
  A nymph shall hereafter arise
Who shall give me, when you are all dead,
  The glory your malice denies;
Shall dignity give to my lay,
  Although but a mere bagatelle;
And even a poet shall say,
  Nothing ever was written so well.

INSCRIPTION

FOR A STONE ERECTED AT THE SOWING OF A GROVE OF OAKS AT CHILLINGTON, THE SEAT OF T. GIFFARD, ESQ. 1790.

JUNE, 1790.

OTHER stones the era tell,
When some feeble mortal fell;
I stand here to date the birth
Of these hardy sons of Earth.
  Which shall longest brave the sky,
Storm and frost—these Oaks or I?
Pass an age or two away,
I must moulder and decay;

But the years that crumble me
Shall invigorate the tree,
Spread its branch, dilate its size,
Lift its summit to the skies.
  Cherish honour, virtue, truth,
So shalt thou prolong thy youth.
Wanting these, however fast
Man be fix'd, and form'd to last,
He is lifeless even now,
Stone at heart, and cannot grow.

ANOTHER,

FOR A STONE ERECTED ON A SIMILAR OCCASION AT THE SAME PLACE IN THE FOLLOWING YEAR.

JUNE, 1790.

READER! Behold a monument
  That asks no sigh or tear,
Though it perpetuate the event
  Of a great burial here.

ANNO 1791.

HYMN

FOR THE USE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT OLNEY.

JULY, 1790.

HEAR, Lord, the song of praise and prayer,
  In heaven thy dwelling-place,
From infants, made the public care,
  And taught to seek thy face!

Thanks for thy Word and for thy Day;
  And grant us, we implore,
Never to waste in sinful play
  Thy holy Sabbaths more.

Thanks that we hear,—but oh! impart
  To each desires sincere,
That we may listen with our heart,
  And learn as well as hear.

For if vain thoughts the minds engage
  Of elder far than we,
What hope that at our heedless age
  Our minds should e'er be free?

Much hope, if thou our spirits take
  Under thy gracious sway,
Who canst the wisest wiser make,
  And babes as wise as they.

Wisdom and bliss thy word bestows,
  A sun that ne'er declines;
And be thy mercies shower'd on those
  Who placed us where it shines[1].

STANZAS

ON THE LATE INDECENT LIBERTIES TAKEN WITH THE REMAINS OF THE GREAT MILTON,—ANNO 1790.

AUGUST, 1790.

"ME too, perchance, in future days,
  The sculptured stone shall show,
With Paphian myrtle or with bays
  Parnassian on my brow.

"But I, or ere that season come,
  Escaped from every care,
Shall reach my refuge in the tomb,
  And sleep securely there[2]."

[1] This Hymn was written at the request of the Rev. James Bean, then Vicar of Olney, to be sung by the children of the Sunday Schools of that town, after a Charity Sermon, preached at the Parish Church for their benefit, on Sunday, July 31, 1790.—J.

[2] *Forsitan et nostros ducat de marmore vultus*
Nectens aut Paphia myrti aut Pernasside lauri
Fronde comas—At ego secura pace quiescam.
Milton in Manso.

So sang, in Roman tone and style,
  The youthful bard, ere long
Ordain'd to grace his native isle
  With her sublimest song.

Who then but must conceive disdain,
  Hearing the deed unblest
Of wretches who have dared profane
  His dread sepulchral rest?

Ill fare the hands that heaved the stones
  Where Milton's ashes lay,
That trembled not to grasp his bones
  And steal his dust away!

O ill-requited bard! neglect
  Thy living worth repaid,
And blind idolatrous respect
  As much affronts thee dead.

TO MRS. KING,

ON HER KIND PRESENT TO THE AUTHOR, A PATCHWORK COUNTERPANE OF HER OWN MAKING.

August 14, 1790.

The Bard, if e'er he feel at all,
Must sure be quicken'd by a call
  Both on his heart and head,
To pay with tuneful thanks the care
And kindness of a lady fair
  Who deigns to deck his bed.

A bed like this, in ancient time,
On Ida's barren top sublime,
  (As Homer's Epic shows,)
Composed of sweetest vernal flowers,
Without the aid of sun or showers,
  For Jove and Juno rose.

Less beautiful, however gay,
Is that which in the scorching day
  Receives the weary swain
Who, laying his long scythe aside,
Sleeps on some bank with daisies pied,
  Till roused to toil again.

What labours of the loom I see!
Looms numberless have groan'd for me!
  Should every maiden come
To scramble for the patch that bears
The impress of the robe she wears,
  The bell would toll for some.

And oh, what havoc would ensue!
This bright display of every hue
  All in a moment fled!
As if a storm should strip the bowers
Of all their tendrils, leaves, and flowers,—
  Each pocketing a shred.

Thanks, then, to every gentle Fair,
Who will not come to peck me bare
  As bird of borrow'd feather,
And thanks to one, above them all,
The gentle Fair of Pertenhall,
  Who put the whole together.

IN

MEMORY OF THE LATE JOHN THORNTON, ESQ.

NOVEMBER, 1790.

POETS attempt the noblest task they can,
Praising the Author of all good in man,
And, next, commemorating Worthies lost,
The dead in whom that good abounded most.
  Thee, therefore, of commercial fame, but more
Famed for thy probity from shore to shore;
Thee, THORNTON! worthy in some page to shine,
As honest and more eloquent than mine,
I mourn; or, since thrice happy thou must be,
The world, no longer thy abode, not thee.

Thee to deplore were grief mispent indeed;
It were to weep that goodness has its meed,
That there is bliss prepared in yonder sky,
And glory for the virtuous, when they die.
  What pleasure can the miser's fondled hoard,
Or spendthrift's prodigal excess afford,
Sweet as the privilege of healing woe
By virtue suffer'd combating below?
That privilege was thine; Heaven gave thee means
To illumine with delight the saddest scenes,
Till thy appearance chased the gloom, forlorn
As midnight, and despairing of a morn.
Thou hadst an industry in doing good,
Restless as his who toils and sweats for food;
Avarice, in thee, was the desire of wealth
By rust unperishable or by stealth;
And if the genuine worth of gold depend
On application to its noblest end,
Thine had a value in the scales of Heaven,
Surpassing all that mine or mint had given.
And, though God made thee of a nature prone
To distribution boundless of thy own,
And still by motives of religious force
Impell'd thee more to that heroic course,
Yet was thy liberality discreet,
Nice in its choice, and of a temper'd heat,
And though in act unwearied, secret still,
As in some solitude the summer rill
Refreshes, where it winds, the faded green,
And cheers the drooping flowers, unheard, unseen.
  Such was thy charity; no sudden start,
After long sleep, of passion in the heart,
But steadfast principle, and, in its kind,
Of close relation to the eternal mind,
Traced easily to its true source above,
To Him, whose works bespeak his nature, Love.
  Thy bounties all were Christian, and I make
This record of thee for the Gospel's sake;
That the incredulous themselves may see
Its use and power exemplified in thee.

TO WARREN HASTINGS, ESQ.

BY AN OLD SCHOOLFELLOW OF HIS AT WESTMINSTER.

HASTINGS! I knew thee young, and of a mind
While young humane, conversable, and kind;
Nor can I well believe thee, gentle then,
Now grown a villain, and the worst of men.
But rather some suspect, who have oppress'd
And worried thee, as not themselves the best.

THE FOUR AGES.

A BRIEF FRAGMENT OF AN EXTENSIVE PROJECTED POEM.

MAY, 1791.

"I COULD be well content, allow'd the use
Of past experience, and the wisdom glean'd
From worn-out follies, now acknowledged such,
To recommence life's trial, in the hope
Of fewer errors, on a second proof!"
  Thus while grey evening lull'd the wind, and call'd
Fresh odours from the shrubbery at my side,
Taking my lonely winding walk, I mused,
And held accustom'd conference with my heart;
When from within it thus a voice replied:
  "Could'st thou in truth? and art thou taught at length
This wisdom, and but this, from all the past?
Is not the pardon of thy long arrear,
Time wasted, violated laws, abuse
Of talents, judgements, mercies, better far
Than opportunity vouchsafed to err
With less excuse, and haply, worse effect?"
  I heard, and acquiesced: then to and fro
Oft pacing, as the mariner his deck,
My gravelly bounds, from self to human kind
I pass'd, and next consider'd, what is man?
  Knows he his origin? can he ascend
By reminiscence to his earliest date?
Slept he in Adam? and in those from him
Through numerous generations, till he found

At length his destined moment to be born?
Or was he not, till fashion'd in the womb?
Deep mysteries both! which schoolmen must have toil'd
To unriddle, and have left them mysteries still.
  It is an evil incident to man,
And of the worst, that unexplored he leaves
Truths useful and attainable with ease,
To search forbidden deeps, where mystery lies
Not to be solved, and useless, if it might.
Mysteries are food for angels; they digest
With ease, and find them nutriment; but man,
While yet he dwells below, must stoop to glean
His manna from the ground, or starve and die.

* * * * * *

THE JUDGEMENT OF THE POETS.

MAY, 1791.

Two nymphs, both nearly of an age,
  Of numerous charms possess'd,
A warm dispute once chanced to wage,
  Whose temper was the best

The worth of each had been complete,
  Had both alike been mild;
But one, although her smile was sweet,
  Frown'd oftener than she smiled.

And in her humour, when she frown'd,
  Would raise her voice and roar,
And shake with fury to the ground
  The garland that she wore.

The other was of gentler cast,
  From all such frenzy clear,
Her frowns were seldom known to last,
  And never proved severe.

To poets of renown in song
  The nymphs referr'd the cause,
Who, strange to tell, all judged it wrong,
  And gave misplaced applause.

They gentle call'd, and kind and soft,
  The flippant and the scold,
And though she changed her mood so oft,
  That failing left untold.

No judges, sure, were e'er so mad,
  Or so resolved to err,—
In short, the charms her sister had
  They lavish'd all on her.

Then thus the God whom fondly they
  Their great Inspirer call,
Was heard, one genial summer's day,
  To reprimand them all.

"Since thus ye have combined," he said,
  "My favourite nymph to slight,
Adorning May, that peevish maid,
  With June's undoubted right,

"The Minx shall, for your folly's sake,
  Still prove herself a shrew,
Shall make your scribbling fingers ache,
  And pinch your noses blue."

THE MORALIZER CORRECTED.

A TALE.

A HERMIT, (or if 'chance you hold
That title now too trite and old),
A man, once young, who lived retired
As hermit could have well desired,
His hours of study closed at last,
And finish'd his concise repast,
Stoppled his cruise, replaced his book
Within its customary nook,
And, staff in hand, set forth to share
The sober cordial of sweet air,
Like Isaac, with a mind applied
To serious thought at eveningtide.

Autumnal rains had made it chill,
And from the trees, that fringed his hill,
Shades slanting at the close of day
Chill'd more his else delightful way;
Distant a little mile he spied
A western bank's still sunny side,
And right toward the favour'd place
Proceeding with his nimblest pace,
In hope to bask a little yet,
Just reach'd it when the sun was set.
  Your hermit, young and jovial sirs!
Learns something from whate'er occurs;—
And hence, he said, my mind computes
The real worth of man's pursuits.
His object chosen, wealth or fame,
Or other sublunary game,
Imagination to his view
Presents it deck'd with every hue,
That can seduce him not to spare
His powers of best exertion there,
But youth, health, vigour to expend
On so desirable an end.
Ere long approach life's evening shades,
The glow that fancy gave it fades;
And, earn'd too late, it wants the grace
That first engaged him in the chase.
  True, answer'd an angelic guide,
Attendant at the senior's side,—
But whether all the time it cost,
To urge the fruitless chase be lost,
Must be decided by the worth
Of that which call'd his ardour forth.
Trifles pursued, whate'er the event,
Must cause him shame or discontent;
A vicious object still is worse,
Successful there he wins a curse;
But he, whom e'en in life's last stage
Endeavours laudable engage,
Is paid at least in peace of mind
And sense of having well design'd;

And if, ere he attain his end,
His sun precipitate descend,
A brighter prize than that he meant
Shall recompense his mere intent.
No virtuous wish can bear a date
Either too early or too late.

THE FAITHFUL BIRD.

THE greenhouse is my summer seat;
My shrubs displaced from that retreat
  Enjoy'd the open air;
Two goldfinches, whose sprightly song
Had been their mutual solace long,
  Lived happy prisoners there.

They sang as blithe as finches sing
That flutter loose on golden wing,
  And frolic where they list;
Strangers to liberty, 'tis true,
But that delight they never knew,
  And therefore never miss'd.

But nature works in every breast,
With force not easily suppress'd;
  And Dick felt some desires,
That, after many an effort vain,
Instructed him at length to gain
  A pass between his wires.

The open windows seem'd to invite
The freeman to a farewell flight;
  But Tom was still confined;
And Dick, although his way was clear,
Was much too generous and sincere
  To leave his friend behind.

So settling on his cage, by play,
And chirp, and kiss, he seem'd to say,

You must not live alone ;—
Nor would he quit that chosen stand
Till I, with slow and cautious hand,
Return'd him to his own.

Oh ye, who never taste the joys
Of friendship, satisfied with noise,
Fandango, ball, and rout !
Blush when I tell you how a bird
A prison with a friend preferr'd
To liberty without.

THE NEEDLESS ALARM.

A TALE.

There is a field, through which I often pass,
Thick overspread with moss and silky grass,
Adjoining close to Kilwick's echoing wood,
Where oft the bitch fox hides her hapless brood,
Reserved to solace many a neighbouring squire,
That he may follow them through brake and brier,
Contusion hazarding of neck or spine,
Which rural gentlemen call sport divine.
A narrow brook, by rushy banks conceal'd,
Runs in a bottom, and divides the field ;
Oaks intersperse it, that had once a head,
But now wear crests of oven wood instead ;
And where the land slopes to its watery bourn
Wide yawns a gulf beside a ragged thorn ;
Bricks line the sides, but shiver'd long ago,
And horrid brambles intertwine below ;
A hollow scoop'd, I judge, in ancient time,
For baking earth, or burning rock to lime.
Not yet the hawthorn bore her berries red,
With which the fieldfare, wintry guest, is fed ;
Nor Autumn yet had brush'd from every spray,
With her chill hand, the mellow leaves away ;
But corn was housed, and beans were in the stack ;
Now therefore issued forth the spotted pack,

With tails high mounted, ears hung low, and throats
With a whole gamut fill'd of heavenly notes,
For which, alas! my destiny severe,
Though ears she gave me two, gave me no ear.
The sun, accomplishing his early march,
His lamp now planted on heaven's topmost arch,
When, exercise and air my only aim,
And heedless whither, to that field I came,
Ere yet with ruthless joy the happy hound
Told hill and dale that Reynard's track was found,
Or with the high raised horn's melodious clang
All Kilwick[1] and all Dinglederry[1] rang.
Sheep grazed the field; some with soft bosom press'd
The herb as soft, while nibbling stray'd the rest;
Nor noise was heard but of the hasty brook,
Struggling, detain'd in many a petty nook.
All seem'd so peaceful, that, from them convey'd,
To me their peace by kind contagion spread.
But when the huntsman, with distended cheek,
'Gan make his instrument of music speak,
And from within the wood that crash was heard,
Though not a hound from whom it burst appear'd,
The sheep recumbent and the sheep that grazed,
All huddling into phalanx, stood and gazed,
Admiring, terrified, the novel strain,
Then coursed the field around, and coursed it round again;
But recollecting, with a sudden thought,
That flight in circles urged advanced them nought,
They gather'd close around the old pit's brink,
And thought again—but knew not what to think.
The man to solitude accustom'd long,
Perceives in every thing that lives a tongue;
Not animals alone, but shrubs and trees
Have speech for him, and understood with ease;
After long drought, when rains abundant fall,
He hears the herbs and flowers rejoicing all;
Knows what the freshness of their hue implies,
How glad they catch the largess of the skies;
But, with precision nicer still, the mind
He scans of every locomotive kind;

[1] Two woods belonging to John Throckmorton, Esq.

Birds of all feather, beasts of every name,
That serve mankind, or shun them, wild or tame;
The looks and gestures of their griefs and fears
Have all articulation in his ears;
He spells them true by intuition's light,
And needs no glossary to set him right.
  This truth premised was needful as a text,
To win due credence to what follows next.
  Awhile they mused; surveying every face,
Thou hadst supposed them of superior race;
Their periwigs of wool and fears combined,
Stamp'd on each countenance such marks of mind,
That sage they seem'd, as lawyers o'er a doubt,
Which, puzzling long, at last they puzzle out;
Or academic tutors, teaching youths,
Sure ne'er to want them, mathematic truths;
When thus a mutton statelier than the rest,
A ram, the ewes and wethers sad address'd:
  Friends! we have lived too long. I never heard
Sounds such as these, so worthy to be fear'd.
Could I believe, that winds for ages pent
In earth's dark womb have found at last a vent,
And from their prisonhouse below arise,
With all these hideous howlings to the skies,
I could be much composed, nor should appear,
For such a cause, to feel the slightest fear.
Yourselves have seen what time the thunders roll'd
All night, me resting quiet in the fold.
Or heard we that tremendous bray alone,
I could expound the melancholy tone;
Should deem it by our old companion made,
The ass; for he, we know, has lately stray'd,
And being lost, perhaps, and wandering wide,
Might be supposed to clamour for a guide.
But ah! those dreadful yells what soul can hear,
That owns a carcass, and not quake for fear?
Demons produce them doubtless, brazen-claw'd,
And fang'd with brass, the Demons are abroad;
I hold it therefore wisest and most fit
That, life to save, we leap into the pit.

Him answer'd then his loving mate and true,
But more discreet than he, a Cambrian ewe.
How? leap into the pit our life to save?
To save our life leap all into the grave?
For can we find it less? Contemplate first
The depth how aweful! falling there, we burst:
Or should the brambles interposed our fall
In part abate, that happiness were small;
For with a race like theirs no chance I see
Of peace or ease to creatures clad as we.
Meantime, noise kills not. Be it Dapple's bray,
Or be it not, or be it whose it may,
And rush those other sounds, that seem by tongues
Of demons utter'd, from whatever lungs,
Sounds are but sounds, and, till the cause appear,
We have at least commodious standing here.
Come fiend, come fury, giant, monster, blast
From earth or hell, we can but plunge at last.
While thus she spake, I fainter heard the peals,
For Reynard, close attended at his heels
By panting dog, tired man, and spatter'd horse,
Through mere good fortune, took a different course.
The flock grew calm again, and I, the road
Following, that led me to my own abode,
Much wonder'd that the silly sheep had found
Such cause of terror in an empty sound,
So sweet to huntsman, gentleman, and hound.

MORAL.

Beware of desperate steps. The darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have pass'd away.

INSCRIPTION

FOR THE TOMB OF MR. HAMILTON.

PAUSE here, and think; a monitory rhyme
Demands one moment of thy fleeting time.
Consult life's silent clock, thy bounding vein;
Seems it to say—"Health here has long to reign?"

Hast thou the vigour of thy youth? an eye
That beams delight? a heart untaught to sigh?
Yet fear! Youth ofttimes healthful and at ease,
Anticipates a day it never sees;
And many a tomb, like Hamilton's, aloud
Exclaims, "Prepare thee for an early shroud!"

EPITAPH ON MRS. M. HIGGINS, OF WESTON.

1791.

LAURELS may flourish round the conqueror's tomb,
But happiest they who win the world to come:
Believers have a silent field to fight,
And their exploits are veil'd from human sight.
They in some nook, where little known they dwell,
Kneel, pray in faith, and rout the hosts of hell;
Eternal triumphs crown their toils divine,
And all those triumphs, Mary, now are thine.

THE RETIRED CAT.

1791.

A POET'S Cat, sedate and grave
As poet well could wish to have,
Was much addicted to inquire
For nooks to which she might retire,
And where, secure as mouse in chink,
She might repose, or sit and think.
I know not where she caught the trick,—
Nature perhaps herself had cast her
In such a mould PHILOSOPHIQUE,
Or else she learn'd it of her Master.
Sometimes ascending, *debonnair*,
An apple-tree, or lofty pear,
Lodged with convenience in the fork,
She watch'd the gardener at his work;
Sometimes her ease and solace sought
In an old empty watering-pot,

There wanting nothing, save a fan,
To seem some nymph in her sedan
Apparell'd in exactest sort,
And ready to be borne to court.
  But love of change it seems has place
Not only in our wiser race,
Cats also feel, as well as we,
That passion's force, and so did she.
Her climbing, she began to find,
Exposed her too much to the wind,
And the old utensil of tin
Was cold and comfortless within:
She therefore wish'd instead of those
Some place of more serene repose,
Where neither cold might come, nor air
Too rudely wanton with her hair,
And sought it in the likeliest mode
Within her master's snug abode.
  A drawer, it chanced, at bottom lined
With linen of the softest kind,
With such as merchants introduce
From India, for the ladies' use,
A drawer impending o'er the rest,
Half open in the topmost chest,
Of depth enough, and none to spare,
Invited her to slumber there;
Puss with delight beyond expression
Survey'd the scene and took possession.
Recumbent at her ease ere long,
And lull'd by her own humdrum song,
She left the cares of life behind,
And slept as she would sleep her last,
When in came, housewifely inclined,
The chambermaid, and shut it fast,
By no malignity impell'd,
But all unconscious whom it held.
  Awaken'd by the shock, cried Puss,
"Was ever cat attended thus!
The open drawer was left, I see,
Merely to prove a nest for me,

For soon as I was well composed
Then came the maid, and it was closed.
How smooth these 'kerchiefs and how sweet!
Oh what a delicate retreat!
I will resign myself to rest
Till Sol declining in the west
Shall call to supper, when, no doubt,
Susan will come and let me out."
  The evening came, the sun descended,
And puss remain'd still unattended.
The night roll'd tardily away,
(With her indeed 'twas never day;)
The sprightly morn her course renew'd,
The evening grey again ensued,
And puss came into mind no more
Than if entomb'd the day before.
With hunger pinch'd, and pinch'd for room,
She now presaged approaching doom,
Nor slept a single wink or purr'd,
Conscious of jeopardy incurr'd.
  That night, by chance, the poet watching,
Heard an inexplicable scratching;
His noble heart went pit-a-pat,
And to himself he said—"What's that?"
He drew the curtain at his side,
And forth he peep'd, but nothing spied;
Yet, by his ear directed, guess'd
Something imprison'd in the chest,
And, doubtful what, with prudent care
Resolved it should continue there.
At length, a voice which well he knew,
A long and melancholy mew,
Saluting his poetic ears,
Consoled him, and dispell'd his fears;
He left his bed, he trod the floor,
He 'gan in haste the drawers explore,
The lowest first, and without stop
The rest in order to the top;
For 'tis a truth well known to most,
That whatsoever thing is lost,

We seek it, ere it come to light,
In every cranny but the right.
Forth skipp'd the cat, not now replete
As erst with airy self-conceit,
Nor in her own fond apprehension
A theme for all the world's attention,
But modest, sober, cured of all
Her notions hyperbolical,
And wishing for a place of rest
Any thing rather than a chest.
Then stepp'd the poet into bed
With this reflection in his head:

MORAL.

Beware of too sublime a sense
Of your own worth and consequence.
The man who dreams himself so great,
And his importance of such weight,
That all around in all that's done
Must move and act for Him alone,
Will learn in school of tribulation
The folly of his expectation.

YARDLEY OAK.

1791.

Survivor sole, and hardly such, of all
That once lived here, thy brethren, at my birth,
(Since which I number threescore winters past,)
A shatter'd veteran, hollow-trunk'd perhaps,
As now, and with excoriate forks deform,
Relics of ages! Could a mind, imbued
With truth from Heaven, created thing adore,
I might with reverence kneel, and worship thee.
It seems idolatry, with some excuse,
When our forefather Druids in their oaks
Imagined sanctity. The conscience, yet
Unpurified by an authentic act
Of amnesty, the meed of blood divine,
Loved not the light, but, gloomy, into gloom

Of thickest shades, like Adam after taste
Of fruit proscribed, as to a refuge, fled.
  Thou wast a bauble once ; a cup and ball,
Which babes might play with ; and the thievish jay,
Seeking her food, with ease might have purloin'd
The auburn nut that held thee, swallowing down
Thy yet close-folded latitude of boughs
And all thine embryo vastness at a gulp.
But Fate thy growth decreed ; autumnal rains
Beneath thy parent tree mellow'd the soil
Design'd thy cradle ; and a skipping deer,
With pointed hoof dibbling the glebe, prepared
The soft receptacle, in which, secure,
Thy rudiments should sleep the winter through.
  So Fancy dreams. Disprove it, if ye can,
Ye reasoners broad awake, whose busy search
Of argument, employ'd too oft amiss,
Sifts half the pleasures of short life away !
  Thou fell'st mature ; and in the loamy clod
Swelling with vegetative force instinct
Didst burst thine egg, as theirs the fabled Twins,
Now stars ; two lobes, protruding, pair'd exact ;
A leaf succeeded, and another leaf,
And, all the elements thy puny growth
Fostering propitious, thou becamest a twig.
  Who lived when thou wast such ? Oh, couldst thou speak
As in Dodona once thy kindred trees
Oracular, I would not curious ask
The future, best unknown, but at thy mouth
Inquisitive, the less ambiguous past.
  By thee I might correct, erroneous oft,
The clock of history, facts and events
Timing more punctual, unrecorded facts
Recovering, and misstated setting right—
Desperate attempt, till trees shall speak again !
  Time made thee what thou wast, king of the woods ;
And Time hath made thee what thou art—a cave
For owls to roost in. Once thy spreading boughs
O'erhung the champaign ; and the numerous flocks,
That grazed it, stood beneath that ample cope
Uncrowded, yet safe-shelter'd from the storm.

No flock frequents thee now. Thou hast outlived
Thy popularity, and art become
(Unless verse rescue thee awhile) a thing
Forgotten, as the foliage of thy youth.
While thus through all the stages thou hast push'd
Of treeship—first a seedling, hid in grass;
Then twig; then sapling; and, as century roll'd
Slow after century, a giant-bulk
Of girth enormous, with moss-cushion'd root
Upheaved above the soil, and sides emboss'd
With prominent wens globose,—till at the last
The rottenness, which time is charged to inflict
On other mighty ones, found also thee.
What exhibitions various hath the world
Witness'd of mutability in all
That we account most durable below!
Change is the diet on which all subsist,
Created changeable, and change at last
Destroys them. Skies uncertain now the heat
Transmitting cloudless, and the solar beam
Now quenching in a boundless sea of clouds,—
Calm and alternate storm, moisture and drought,
Invigorate by turns the springs of life
In all that live, plant, animal, and man,
And in conclusion mar them. Nature's threads,
Fine passing thought, e'en in her coarsest works,
Delight in agitation, yet sustain,
The force, that agitates, not unimpair'd;
But, worn by frequent impulse, to the cause
Of their best tone their dissolution owe.
Thought cannot spend itself, comparing still
The great and little of thy lot, thy growth
From almost nullity into a state
Of matchless grandeur, and declension thence,
Slow, into such magnificent decay.
Time was, when, settling on thy leaf, a fly
Could shake thee to the root—and time has been
When tempests could not. At thy firmest age
Thou hadst within thy bole solid contents,
That might have ribb'd the sides and plank'd the deck
Of some flagg'd admiral; and tortuous arms,

The shipwright's darling treasure, didst present
To the four-quarter'd winds, robust and bold,
Warp'd into tough knee-timber[1], many a load!
But the axe spared thee. In those thriftier days
Oaks fell not, hewn by thousands, to supply
The bottomless demands of contest, waged
For senatorial honours. Thus to Time
The task was left to whittle thee away
With his sly scythe, whose ever-nibbling edge,
Noiseless, an atom and an atom more
Disjoining from the rest, has, unobserved,
Achieved a labour, which had far and wide,
By man perform'd, made all the forest ring.
Embowell'd now, and of thy ancient self
Possessing nought but the scoop'd rind, that seems
An huge throat, calling to the clouds for drink,
Which it would give in rivulets to thy root,
Thou temptest none, but rather much forbidd'st
The feller's toil, which thou couldst ill requite.
Yet is thy root sincere, sound as the rock,
A quarry of stout spurs, and knotted fangs,
Which, crook'd into a thousand whimsies, clasp
The stubborn soil, and hold thee still erect.
So stands a kingdom, whose foundation yet
Fails not, in virtue and in wisdom laid,
Though all the superstructure, by the tooth
Pulverized of venality, a shell
Stands now, and semblance only of itself!
Thine arms have left thee. Winds have rent them off
Long since, and rovers of the forest wild
With bow and shaft, have burnt them. Some have left
A splinter'd stump, bleach'd to a snowy white;
And some, memorial none, where once they grew.
Yet life still lingers in thee, and puts forth
Proof not contemptible of what she can,
Even where death predominates. The spring
Finds thee not less alive to her sweet force,
Than yonder upstarts of the neighbouring wood,

[1] Knee-timber is found in the crooked arms of oak, which, by reason of their distortion, are easily adjusted to the angle formed where the deck and the ship's sides meet.

So much thy juniors, who their birth received
Half a millenium since the date of thine.
  But since, although well qualified by age
To teach, no spirit dwells in thee, nor voice
May be expected from thee, seated here
On thy distorted root, with hearers none,
Or prompter, save the scene, I will perform
Myself the oracle, and will discourse
In my own ear such matter as I may.
  One man alone, the father of us all,
Drew not his life from woman; never gazed,
With mute unconsciousness of what he saw,
On all around him; learn'd not by degrees,
Nor owed articulation to his ear;
But, moulded by his Maker into man
At once, upstood intelligent, survey'd
All creatures, with precision understood
Their purport, uses, properties, assign'd
To each his name significant, and fill'd
With love and wisdom, render'd back to Heaven
In praise harmonious the first air he drew.
He was excused the penalties of dull
Minority. No tutor charged his hand
With the thought-tracing quill, or task'd his mind
With problems. History, not wanted yet,
Lean'd on her elbow, watching Time, whose course,
Eventful, should supply her with a theme.

* * * * * *

TO THE NIGHTINGALE,

WHICH THE AUTHOR HEARD SING ON NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1792.

WHENCE is it, that amazed I hear
  From yonder wither'd spray,
This foremost morn of all the year,
  The melody of May?

And why, since thousands would be proud
  Of such a favour shown,
Am I selected from the crowd,
  To witness it alone?

Sing'st thou, sweet Philomel, to me,
  For that I also long
Have practised in the groves like thee,
  Though not like thee in song?

Or sing'st thou rather under force
  Of some divine command,
Commission'd to presage a course
  Of happier days at hand?

Thrice welcome then! for many a long
  And joyless year have I,
As thou to-day, put forth my song
  Beneath a wintry sky.

But Thee no wintry skies can harm,
  Who only need'st to sing,
To make even January charm,
  And every season Spring.

LINES

WRITTEN FOR INSERTION IN A COLLECTION OF HANDWRITINGS AND SIGNATURES MADE BY MISS PATTY, SISTER OF HANNAH MORE.

MARCH 6, 1792.

IN vain to live from age to age
  While modern bards endeavour,
I write my name in Patty's page,
  And gain my point for ever.

W. COWPER.

EPITAPH

ON A FREE BUT TAME REDBREAST, A FAVOURITE OF MISS SALLY HURDIS.

MARCH, 1792.

THESE are not dew-drops, these are tears,
  And tears by Sally shed
For absent Robin, who she fears
  With too much cause, is dead.

One morn he came not to her hand
  As he was wont to come,
And, on her finger perch'd, to stand
  Picking his breakfast-crumb.

Alarm'd she call'd him, and perplext
  She sought him, but in vain;
That day he came not, nor the next,
  Nor ever came again.

She therefore raised him here a tomb,
  Though where he fell, or how,
None knows, so secret was his doom,
  Nor where he moulders now.

Had half a score of coxcombs died,
  In social Robin's stead,
Poor Sally's tears had soon been dried,
  Or haply never shed.

But Bob was neither rudely bold
  Nor spiritlessly tame,
Nor was, like theirs, his bosom cold,
  But always in a flame.

SONNET TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

April 16, 1792.

Thy country, Wilberforce, with just disdain,
  Hears thee by cruel men and impious call'd
  Fanatic, for thy zeal to loose the enthrall'd
From exile, public sale, and slavery's chain.
  Friend of the poor, the wrong'd, the fetter-gall'd,
Fear not lest labour such as thine be vain.
  Thou hast achieved a part; hast gain'd the ear
Of Britain's senate to thy glorious cause;
Hope smiles, joy springs, and though cold caution pause
  And weave delay, the better hour is near
  That shall remunerate thy toils severe
By peace for Afric, fenced with British laws.
Enjoy what thou hast won, esteem and love
From all the just on earth, and all the blest above.

EPIGRAM.

(PRINTED IN THE NORTHAMPTON MERCURY.)

To purify their wine some people bleed
A lamb into the barrel, and succeed;
No nostrum, planters say, is half so good
To make fine sugar, as a *negro's* blood.
Now *lambs* and *negroes* both are harmless things,
And thence perhaps this wondrous virtue springs.
'Tis in the blood of innocence alone—
Good cause why planters never try their own.

TO DR AUSTIN,

OF CECIL STREET, LONDON.

MAY 26, 1782.

AUSTIN! accept a grateful verse from me,
The poet's treasure, no inglorious fee.
Loved by the Muses, thy ingenuous mind
Pleasing requital in my verse may find;
Verse oft has dash'd the scythe of Time aside,
Immortalizing names which else had died.
And oh! could I command the glittering wealth
With which sick kings are glad to purchase health;
Yet, if extensive fame, and sure to live,
Were in the power of verse like mine to give,
I would not recompense his art with less,
Who, giving Mary health, heals my distress.
  Friend of my friend[1]! I love thee, though unknown,
And boldly call thee, being his, my own.

SONNET

ADDRESSED

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

JUNE 2, 1792.

HAYLEY, thy tenderness fraternal shown
  In our first interview, delightful guest!
  To Mary and me for her dear sake distress'd,
Such as it is has made my heart thy own,

[1] Hayley.

Though heedless now of new engagements grown;
For threescore winters make a wintry breast,
And I had purposed ne'er to go in quest
Of Friendship more, except with God alone.
But Thou hast won me; nor is God my foe,
Who, ere this last afflictive scene began,
Sent Thee to mitigate the dreadful blow,
My brother, by whose sympathy I know
Thy true deserts infallibly to scan,
Not more to admire the Bard than love the Man.

MARY AND JOHN.

If John marries Mary, and Mary alone,
'Tis a very good match between Mary and John.
Should John wed a score, Oh, the claws and the scratches!
It can't be a match:—'tis a bundle of matches.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

Dear President, whose art sublime
Gives perpetuity to time,
And bids transactions of a day,
That fleeting hours would waft away
To dark futurity, survive,
And in unfading beauty live,—
You cannot with a grace decline
A special mandate of the Nine,
Yourself, whatever task you choose,
So much indebted to the Muse.
Thus say the sisterhood:—We come;
Fix well your pallet on your thumb,
Prepare the pencil and the tints,
We come to furnish you with hints.
French disappointment, British glory,
Must be the subject of the story.
First strike a curve, a graceful bow,
Then slope it to a point below;
Your outline easy, airy, light,
Fill'd up becomes a paper kite.

Let independence, sanguine, horrid,
Blaze like a meteor in the forehead:
Beneath (but lay aside your graces)
Draw six-and-twenty rueful faces,
Each with a staring, steadfast eye,
Fix'd on his great and good ally.
France flies the kite—'tis on the wing—
Britannia's lightning cuts the string.
The wind that raised it, ere it ceases,
Just rends it into thirteen pieces,
Takes charge of every fluttering sheet,
And lays them all at George's feet.
  Iberia, trembling from afar,
Renounces the confederate war;
Her efforts and her arts o'ercome,
France calls her shatter'd navies home;
Repenting Holland learns to mourn
The sacred treaties she has torn;
Astonishment and awe profound
Are stamp'd upon the nations round;
Without one friend, above all foes,
Britannia gives the world repose.

ON THE

AUTHOR OF LETTERS ON LITERATURE[1].

The genius of the Augustan age
  His head among Rome's ruins rear'd,
And bursting with heroic rage,
  When literary Heron appear'd,

Thou hast, he cried, like him of old
  Who set the Ephesian dome on fire,
By being scandalously bold,
  Attain'd the mark of thy desire.

And for traducing Virgil's name
  Shalt share his merited reward;
A perpetuity of fame,
  That rots, and stinks, and is abhorr'd.

[1] Nominally by Robert Heron, but written by John Pinkerton. 8vo. 1785.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 22, 1782.

If reading verse be your delight,
'Tis mine as much, or more, to write;
But what we would, so weak is man,
Lies oft remote from what we can.
For instance, at this very time,
I feel a wish, by cheerful rhyme,
To soothe my friend, and, had I power,
To cheat him of an anxious hour;
Not meaning, (for, I must confess,
It were but folly to suppress,)
His pleasure or his good alone,
But squinting partly at my own.
But though the sun is flaming high
In the centre of yon arch, the sky,
And he had once (and who but he?)
The name for setting genius free,
Yet whether poets of past days
Yielded him undeserved praise,
And he by no uncommon lot
Was famed for virtues he had not;
Or whether, which is like enough,
His Highness may have taken huff,
So seldom sought with invocation,
Since it has been the reigning fashion
To disregard his inspiration,
I seem no brighter in my wits,
For all the radiance he emits,
Than if I saw, through midnight vapour,
The glimmering of a farthing taper.
Oh for a succedaneum, then,
To' accelerate a creeping pen!
Oh for a ready succedaneum,
Quod caput, cerebrum, et cranium
Pondere liberet exoso,
Et morbo jam caliginoso!
'Tis here; this oval box well fill'd
With best tobacco, finely mill'd,

Beats all Anticyra's pretences
To disengage the encumber'd senses.
  Oh nymph of Transatlantic fame,
Where'er thine haunt, whate'er thy name,
Whether reposing on the side
Of Oroonoquo's spacious tide
Or listening with delight not small
To Niagara's distant fall,
'Tis thine to cherish and to feed
The pungent nose-refreshing weed,
Which, whether pulverized it gain
A speedy passage to the brain,
Or whether, touch'd with fire, it rise
In circling eddies to the skies,
Does thought more quicken and refine
Than all the breath of all the Nine;
Forgive the bard, if bard he be,
Who once too wantonly made free,
To touch with a satiric wipe
That symbol of thy power, the pipe;
So may no blight infest thy plains,
And no unseasonable rains;
And so may smiling peace once more
Visit America's sad shore;
And thou, secure from all alarms,
Of thundering drums, and glittering arms,
Rove unconfined beneath the shade
Thy wide-expanded leaves have made;
So may thy votaries increase,
And fumigation never cease.
May Newton with renew'd delights
Perform thy odoriferous rites,
While clouds of incense half divine
Involve thy disappearing shrine;
And so may smoke-inhaling Bull
Be always filling, never full.

CATHARINA.

TO MISS STAPLETON, NOW MRS. COURTENAY.

She came—she is gone—we have met—
  And meet perhaps never again;
The sun of that moment is set,
  And seems to have risen in vain;
Catharina has fled like a dream,
  (So vanishes pleasure, alas!)
But has left a regret and esteem
  That will not so suddenly pass.

The last evening ramble we made,
  Catharina, Maria, and I,
Our progress was often delay'd
  By the nightingale warbling nigh.
We paused under many a tree,
  And much she was charm'd with a tone
Less sweet to Maria and me,
  Who so lately had witness'd her own.

My numbers that day she had sung,
  And gave them a grace so divine,
As only her musical tongue
  Could infuse into numbers of mine.
The longer I heard, I esteem'd
  The work of my fancy the more,
And e'en to myself never seem'd
  So tuneful a poet before.

Though the pleasures of London exceed
  In number the days of the year,
Catharina, did nothing impede,
  Would feel herself happier here;
For the close-woven arches of limes
  On the banks of our river, I know,
Are sweeter to her many times
  Than aught that the city can show.

So it is, when the mind is endued
  With a well-judging taste from above,
Then, whether embellish'd or rude,
  'Tis nature alone that we love.
The achievements of art may amuse,
  May even our wonder excite,
But groves, hills, and valleys diffuse
  A lasting, a sacred delight.

Since then in the rural recess
  Catharina alone can rejoice,
May it still be her lot to possess
  The scene of her sensible choice!
To inhabit a mansion remote
  From the clatter of street-pacing steeds,
And by Philomel's annual note
  To measure the life that she leads.

With her book, and her voice, and the lyre,
  To wing all her moments at home,
And with scenes that new rapture inspire,
  As oft as it suits her to roam,
She will have just the life she prefers,
  With little to hope or to fear,
And ours would be pleasant as hers,
  Might we view her enjoying it here.

CATHARINA:

THE SECOND PART.

ON HER MARRIAGE TO GEORGE COURTENAY, ESQ.

JUNE, 1792.

BELIEVE it or not, as you chuse,
  The doctrine is certainly true,
That the future is known to the Muse,
  And poets are oracles too.
I did but express a desire,
  To see Catharina at home,
At the side of my friend George's fire,
  And lo—she is actually come.

Such prophecy some may despise,
  But the wish of a poet and friend
Perhaps is approved in the skies,
  And therefore attains to its end.
'Twas a wish that flew ardently forth
  From a bosom effectually warm'd
With the talents, the graces, and worth
  Of the person for whom it was form'd.

Maria[1] would leave us, I knew,
  To the grief and regret of us all,
But less to our grief, could we view
  Catharina the Queen of the Hall.
And therefore I wish'd as I did,
  And therefore this union of hands;
Not a whisper was heard to forbid,
  But all cry, Amen! to the bans.

Since therefore I seem to incur
  No danger of wishing in vain,
When making good wishes for Her,
  I will e'en to my wishes again;
With one I have made her a Wife,
  And now I will try with another,
Which I cannot suppress for my life,
  How soon I can make her a Mother.

ON

THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE

OUT OF NORFOLK,

THE GIFT OF MY COUSIN, ANNE BODHAM.

O THAT those lips had language! Life has pass'd
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,
The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,
"Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!"

[1] Lady Throckmorton.

The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
(Blest be the art that can immortalize,
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
To quench it!) here shines on me still the same.
Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
O welcome guest, though unexpected here!
Who bidst me honour with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long,
I will obey, not willingly alone,
But gladly, as the precept were her own;
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
A momentary dream, that thou art she.
My mother! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss;
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
Ah, that maternal smile!—it answers—Yes.
I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting word shall pass my lips no more!
Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
(What ardently I wish'd, I long believed,
And disappointed still, was still deceived;
By expectation every day beguiled,
Dupe of to-morrow even from a child.)
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
Till, all my stock of infant sorrows spent,
I learn'd at last submission to my lot,
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.
Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;

And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
Drew me to school along the public way,
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapt
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet-capt,
'Tis now become a history little known,
That once we call'd the pastoral house our own.
Shortlived possession! But the record fair,
That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,
Still outlives many a storm, that has effaced
A thousand other themes less deeply traced.
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made
That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid;
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
The biscuit, or confectionary plum;
The fragrant waters on my checks bestow'd
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glow'd:
All this, and more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,
Ne'er roughen'd by those cataracts and breaks,
That humour interposed too often makes;
All this still legible in memory's page,
And still to be so to my latest age,
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
Such honours to thee as my numbers may;
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
Not scorn'd in heaven, though little noticed here.
  Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,
When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,
The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
I prick'd them into paper with a pin,
(And thou wast happier than myself the while,
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head, and smile,)
Could those few pleasant days again appear,
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here?
I would not trust my heart;—the dear delight
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.—
But no—what here we call our life is such,
So little to be loved, and thou so much,
That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast
(The storms all weather'd, and the ocean cross'd)
Shoots into port at some well-haven'd isle,
Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,
There sits quiescent on the floods, that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incense play
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay;
So thou, with sails how swift! hast reach'd the shore,
"Where tempests never beat nor billows roar[1];"
And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide
Of life long since has anchor'd by thy side.
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
Always from port withheld, always distress'd,—
Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-toss'd,
Sails ripp'd, seams opening wide, and compass lost,
And day by day some current's thwarting force
Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.
Yet O the thought, that thou art safe, and he!
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
My boast is not that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned and rulers of the earth;
But higher far my proud pretensions rise,—
The son of parents pass'd into the skies.
And now, farewell!—Time unrevoked has run
His wonted course, yet what I wish'd is done.
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again;
To have renew'd the joys that once were mine
Without the sin of violating thine;
And, while the wings of fancy still are free,
And I can view this mimic show of thee,
Time has but half succeeded in his theft,—
Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

THE POPLAR FIELD.

THE poplars are fell'd; farewell to the shade,
And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade!

[1] Garth.

The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,
Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives.

Twelve years have elapsed since I first took a view
Of my favourite field, and the bank where they grew;
And now in the grass behold they are laid,
And the tree is my seat that once lent me a shade!

The blackbird has fled to another retreat,
Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat,
And the scene where his melody charm'd me before,
Resounds with his sweet flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are all hasting away,
And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,
With a turf on my breast, and a stone at my head,
Ere another such grove shall rise in its stead.

'Tis a sight to engage me, if any thing can,
To muse on the perishing pleasures of man;
Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see,
Have a being less durable even than he[1].

ON A MISCHIEVOUS BULL,

WHICH THE OWNER OF HIM SOLD AT THE AUTHOR'S INSTANCE.

Go!—thou art all unfit to share
  The pleasures of this place
With such as its old tenants are,
  Creatures of gentler race.

The squirrel here his hoard provides,
  Aware of wintry storms;
And woodpeckers explore the sides
  Of rugged oaks for worms.

[1] Cowper afterwards altered this last stanza in the following manner:—

The change both my heart and my fancy employs,
I reflect on the frailty of man and his joys;
Short-lived as we are, yet our pleasures, we see,
Have a still shorter date, and die sooner than we.

The sheep here smooths the knotted thorn
With frictions of her fleece;
And here I wander eve and morn,
Like her, a friend to peace.

Ah!—I could pity thee exiled
From this secure retreat;—
I would not lose it to be styled
The happiest of the great.

But thou canst taste no calm delight;
Thy pleasure is to show
Thy magnanimity in fight,
Thy prowess,—therefore, go!

I care not whether east or north,
So I no more may find thee;
The angry Muse thus sings thee forth,
And claps the gate behind thee.

AN EPITAPH.

1792.

Here lies one who never drew
Blood himself, yet many slew;
Gave the gun its aim, and figure
Made in field, yet ne'er pull'd trigger.
Armed men have gladly made
Him their guide, and him obey'd;
At his signified desire,
Would advance, present, and fire.
Stout he was, and large of limb,
Scores have fled at sight of him;
And to all this fame he rose
Only following his Nose.
Neptune was he call'd; not He
Who controuls the boisterous sea,
But of happier command,
Neptune of the furrow'd land;
And, your wonder vain to shorten,
Pointer to *Sir John Throckmorton.*

EPITAPH ON FOP,

A DOG BELONGING TO LADY THROCKMORTON.

AUGUST, 1792.

THOUGH once a puppy, and though Fop by name,
Here moulders one whose bones some honour claim,
No sycophant, although of spaniel race,
And though no hound, a martyr to the chase.
Ye squirrels, rabbits, leverets, rejoice!
Your haunts no longer echo to his voice;
This record of his fate exulting view,
He died worn out with vain pursuit of you.
"Yes"—the indignant shade of Fop replies—
"And worn with vain pursuit man also dies."

SONNET TO GEORGE ROMNEY, ESQ.

ON HIS PICTURE OF ME IN CRAYONS, DRAWN AT EARTHAM, IN THE SIXTY-FIRST YEAR OF MY AGE, AND IN THE MONTHS OF AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER, 1792.

OCTOBER, 1792.

ROMNEY, expert infallibly to trace
On chart or canvass, not the form alone
And semblance, but, however faintly shown,
The mind's impression too on every face;
With strokes that time ought never to erase
Thou hast so pencil'd mine, that though I own
The subject worthless, I have never known
The artist shining with superior grace.
But this I mark,—that symptoms none of woe
In thy incomparable work appear.
Well—I am satisfied it should be so,
Since, on maturer thought, the cause is clear;
For in my looks what sorrow couldst thou see,
When I was Hayley's guest, and sat to thee?

ON RECEIVING HAYLEY'S PICTURE.

JANUARY, 1793.

IN language warm as could be breathed or penn'd
Thy picture speaks the original my friend,
Not by those looks that indicate thy mind,
They only speak thee friend of all mankind;
Expression here more soothing still I see,
That friend of *all*, a partial friend to *me*.

EPITAPH ON MR. CHESTER, OF CHICHELEY.

APRIL, 1793.

TEARS flow, and cease not, where the good man lies,
Till all who know him follow to the skies.
Tears therefore fall where Chester's ashes sleep;
Him wife, friends, brothers, children, servants, weep;
And justly—few shall ever him transcend
As husband, parent, brother, master, friend.

ON A PLANT OF VIRGIN'S-BOWER,

DESIGNED TO COVER A GARDEN-SEAT.

SPRING OF 1793.

THRIVE, gentle plant! and weave a bower
  For Mary and for me,
And deck with many a splendid flower
  Thy foliage large and free.

Thou camest from Eartham, and wilt shade,
  (If truly I divine,)
Some future day the illustrious head
  Of him who made thee mine.

Should Daphne show a jealous frown,
  And Envy seize the Bay,
Affirming none so fit to crown
  Such honour'd brows as they.

Thy cause with zeal we shall defend,
  And with convincing power!
For why should not the Virgin's friend
  Be crown'd with Virgin's Bower?

TO MY COUSIN, ANNE BODHAM,

ON

RECEIVING FROM HER A NETWORK PURSE, MADE BY HERSELF.

MAY 4, 1793.

MY gentle Anne, whom heretofore,
When I was young, and thou no more
  Than plaything for a nurse,
I danced and fondled on my knee,
A kitten both in size and glee,—
  I thank thee for my purse.

Gold pays the worth of all things here;
But not of love;—that gem's too dear
  For richest rogues to win it;
I, therefore, as a proof of love,
Esteem thy present far above
  The best things kept within it.

INSCRIPTION

FOR AN HERMITAGE IN THE AUTHOR'S GARDEN.

MAY, 1793.

THIS cabin, Mary, in my sight appears,
Built as it has been in our waning years,
A rest afforded to our weary feet,
Preliminary to—the last retreat.

TO MRS. UNWIN.

MAY, 1793.

MARY! I want a lyre with other strings,
  Such aid from heaven as some have feign'd they drew,
  An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new
And undebased by praise of meaner things,
That ere through age or woe I shed my wings,
  I may record thy worth with honour due,
  In verse as musical as thou art true,
And that immortalizes whom it sings.
But thou hast little need. There is a book
  By seraphs writ with beams of heavenly light,
On which the eyes of God not rarely look,
  A chronicle of actions just and bright;
There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine;
And, since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine.

TO JOHN JOHNSON,

ON HIS PRESENTING ME WITH AN ANTIQUE BUST OF HOMER.

MAY, 1793.

KINSMAN beloved, and as a son by me!
  When I behold this fruit of thy regard,
  The sculptured form of my old favourite bard,
I reverence feel for him, and love for thee.
Joy too and grief. Much joy that there should be
  Wise men and learn'd who grudge not to reward
  With some applause my bold attempt and hard,
Which others scorn: critics by courtesy.
The grief is this, that sunk in Homer's mine,
  I lose my precious years now soon to fail,
Handling his gold, which howsoe'er it shine,
  Proves dross, when balanced in the Christian scale.
Be wiser thou;—like our forefather DONNE,
Seek heavenly wealth, and work for God alone.

TO A YOUNG FRIEND,

ON HIS ARRIVING AT CAMBRIDGE WET, WHEN NO RAIN HAD FALLEN THERE.

MAY, 1793.

IF Gideon's fleece, which drench'd with dew he found,
While moisture none refresh'd the herbs around,
Might fitly represent the Church, endow'd
With heavenly gifts to heathens not allow'd;
In pledge, perhaps, of favours from on high,
Thy locks were wet when others' locks were dry.
Heaven grant us half the omen,—may we see
Not drought on others, but much dew on thee!

A TALE.

JUNE, 1793.

IN Scotland's realm, where trees are few,
  Nor even shrubs abound;
But where, however bleak the view
  Some better things are found;

For husband there and wife may boast
  Their union undefiled,
And false ones are as rare almost
  As hedge-rows in the wild;

In Scotland's realm forlorn and bare
  The history chanced of late,—
This history of a wedded pair,
  A chaffinch and his mate.

The spring drew near, each felt a breast
  With genial instinct fill'd;
They pair'd, and would have built a nest,
  But found not where to build.

The heaths uncover'd and the moors
  Except with snow and sleet,
Sea-beaten rocks and naked shores
  Could yield them no retreat.

Long time a breeding-place they sought,
  Till both grew vex'd and tired;
At length a ship arriving brought
  The good so long desired.

A ship?—could such a restless thing
  Afford them place of rest?
Or was the merchant charged to bring
  The homeless birds a nest?

Hush!—silent hearers profit most,—
  This racer of the sea
Proved kinder to them than the coast,
  It served them with a tree.

But such a tree! 'twas shaven deal,
  The tree they call a mast,
And had a hollow with a wheel
  Through which the tackle pass'd.

Within that cavity aloft
  Their roofless home they fix'd,
Form'd with materials neat and soft,
  Bents, wool, and feathers mix'd.

Four ivory eggs soon pave its floor,
  With russet specks bedight;
The vessel weighs, forsakes the shore,
  And lessens to the sight.

The mother-bird is gone to sea,
  As she had changed her kind;
But goes the male? Far wiser he
  Is doubtless left behind.

No;—Soon as from ashore he saw
  The winged mansion move,
He flew to reach it, by a law
  Of never-failing love.

Then perching at his consort's side,
  Was briskly borne along,
The billows and the blast defied,
  And cheer'd her with a song.

The seaman with sincere delight
  His feather'd shipmates eyes,
Scarce less exulting in the sight
  Than when he tows a prize.

For seamen much believe in signs,
  And from a chance so new
Each some approaching good divines,
  And may his hopes be true!

Hail, honour'd land! a desert where
  Not even birds can hide,
Yet parent of this loving pair
  Whom nothing could divide.

And ye who, rather than resign
  Your matrimonial plan,
Were not afraid to plough the brine
  In company with man;

For whose lean country much disdain
  We English often show,
Yet from a richer nothing gain
  But wantonness and woe;

Be it your fortune, year by year,
  The same resource to prove,
And may ye, sometimes landing here,
  Instruct us how to love[1]!

[1] This tale is founded on an article of intelligence which the author found in the Buckinghamshire Herald, for Saturday, June 1, 1793, in the following words.

Glasgow, May 23.

"In a block, or pulley, near the head of the mast of a gabert, now lying at the Broomielaw, there is a chaffinch's nest and four eggs. The nest was built while the vessel lay at Greenock, and was followed hither by both birds. Though the block is occasionally lowered for the inspection of the curious, the birds have not forsaken the nest. The cock however visits the nest but seldom; while the hen never leaves it, but when she descends to the hull for food."

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

JUNE 29, 1793.

DEAR architect of fine CHATEAUX in air,
  Worthier to stand for ever, if they could,
  Than any built of stone, or yet of wood,
For back of royal elephant to bear;
O for permission from the skies to share,
  Much to my own, though little to thy good,
  With thee, (not subject to the jealous mood!)
A partnership of literary ware!
But I am bankrupt now; and doom'd henceforth
  To drudge, in descant dry, on others' lays;
Bards, I acknowledge, of unequall'd worth,
  But what is commentator's happiest praise?
That he has furnish'd lights for other eyes,
Which they who need them use, and then despise.

ON

A SPANIEL, CALLED BEAU,

KILLING A YOUNG BIRD.

JULY 15, 1793.

A SPANIEL, Beau, that fares like you,
  Well fed, and at his ease,
Should wiser be than to pursue
  Each trifle that he sees.

But you have kill'd a tiny bird,
  Which flew not till to-day,
Against my orders, whom you heard
  Forbidding you the prey.

Nor did you kill that you might eat,
  And ease a doggish pain,
For him, though chased with furious heat,
  You left where he was slain.

Nor was he of the thievish sort,
  Or one whom blood allures,
But innocent was all his sport
  Whom you have torn for yours.

My dog! what remedy remains,
  Since, teach you all I can,
I see you, after all my pains,
  So much resemble man!

BEAU'S REPLY.

Sir, when I flew to seize the bird
  In spite of your command,
A louder voice than yours I heard,
  And harder to withstand.

You cried—forbear!—but in my breast
  A mightier cried—proceed!—
'Twas nature, sir, whose strong behest
  Impell'd me to the deed.

Yet much as nature I respect,
  I ventured once to break
(As you perhaps may recollect)
  Her precept for your sake;

And when your linnet on a day,
  Passing his prison door,
Had flutter'd all his strength away,
  And panting press'd the floor;

Well knowing him a sacred thing,
  Not destined to my tooth,
I only kiss'd his ruffled wing,
  And lick'd the feathers smooth.

Let my obedience then excuse
  My disobedience now,
Nor some reproof yourself refuse
  From your aggrieved bow-wow;

If killing birds be such a crime,
  (Which I can hardly see,)
What think you, sir, of killing time
  With verse address'd to me?

ANSWER

TO

STANZAS ADDRESSED TO LADY HESKETH,

BY MISS CATHARINE FANSHAWE,

IN RETURNING A POEM OF MR. COWPER'S, LENT TO HER ON CONDITION SHE SHOULD NEITHER SHOW IT, NOR TAKE A COPY.

1793.

To be remember'd *thus* is fame,
And in the first degree;
And did the *few like her* the same,
The press might sleep for me.

So Homer, in the memory stored
Of many a Grecian belle,
Was once preserved—a richer hoard,
But never lodged so well.

TO THE

SPANISH ADMIRAL COUNT GRAVINA,

ON HIS TRANSLATING THE AUTHOR'S SONG ON A ROSE INTO ITALIAN VERSE.

1793.

My rose, Gravina, blooms anew;
And steep'd not now in rain,
But in Castalian streams by you,
Will never fade again.

ON FLAXMAN'S PENELOPE.

Sept. 1793.

The suitors sinn'd, but with a fair excuse,
Whom all this elegance might well seduce;
Nor can our censure on the husband fall,
Who, for a wife so lovely, slew them all.

ON RECEIVING

HEYNE'S VIRGIL FROM MR. HAYLEY

Oct. 1793.

I SHOULD have deem'd it once an effort vain
To sweeten more sweet Maro's matchless strain,
But from that error now behold me free,
Since I received him as a gift from thee.

TO MARY.

Autumn of 1793.

THE twentieth year is well nigh past,
Since first our sky was overcast;—
Ah would that this might be the last!
My Mary!

Thy spirits have a fainter flow,
I see thee daily weaker grow;—
'Twas my distress that brought thee low,
My Mary!

Thy needles, once a shining store,
For my sake restless heretofore,
Now rust disused, and shine no more,
My Mary!

For though thou gladly wouldst fulfil
The same kind office for me still,
Thy sight now seconds not thy will,
My Mary!

But well thou play'dst the housewife's part,
And all thy threads with magic art
Have wound themselves about this heart,
My Mary!

Thy indistinct expressions seem
Like language utter'd in a dream;
Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,
My Mary!

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,
Are still more lovely in my sight
Than golden beams of orient light,
My Mary!

For could I view nor them nor thee,
What sight worth seeing could I see?
The sun would rise in vain for me,
My Mary!

Partakers of thy sad decline,
Thy hands their little force resign;
Yet gently prest, press gently mine,
My Mary!

Such feebleness of limbs thou provest,
That now at every step thou movest
Upheld by two, yet still thou lovest,
My Mary!

And still to love, though prest with ill,
In wintry age to feel no chill,
With me is to be lovely still,
My Mary!

But ah! by constant heed I know,
How oft the sadness that I show,
Transforms thy smiles to looks of woe,
My Mary!

And should my future lot be cast
With much resemblance of the past,
Thy worn-out heart will break at last,
My Mary!

ON THE ICE ISLANDS

SEEN FLOATING IN THE GERMAN OCEAN.

March 19, 1799.

What portents, from what distant region, ride,
Unseen till now in ours, the astonish'd tide?
In ages past, old Proteus, with his droves
Of sea-calves, sought the mountains and the groves;

But now, descending whence of late they stood,
Themselves the mountains seem to rove the flood;
Dire times were they, full-charged with human woes;
And these, scarce less calamitous than those.
What view we now? More wondrous still! Behold!
Like burnish'd brass they shine, or beaten gold;
And all around the pearl's pure splendour show,
And all around the ruby's fiery glow.
Come they from India, where the burning earth,
All bounteous, gives her richest treasures birth;
And where the costly gems, that beam around
The brows of mightiest potentates, are found?
No. Never such a countless dazzling store
Had left, unseen, the Ganges' peopled shore;
Rapacious hands, and ever-watchful eyes,
Should sooner far have mark'd and seized the prize.
Whence sprang they then? Ejected have they come
From Ves'vius', or from Ætna's burning womb?
Thus shine they self-illumed, or but display
The borrow'd splendours of a cloudless day?
With borrow'd beams they shine. The gales, that breathe
Now landward, and the current's force beneath,
Have borne them nearer; and the nearer sight,
Advantaged more, contemplates them aright.
Their lofty summits crested high, they show,
With mingled sleet, and long-incumbent snow,
The rest is ice. Far hence, where, most severe,
Bleak Winter well-nigh saddens all the year,
Their infant growth began. He bade arise
Their uncouth forms, portentous in our eyes.
Oft as dissolved by transient suns, the snow
Left the tall cliff to join the flood below,
He caught, and curdled with a freezing blast
The current, ere it reach'd the boundless waste.
By slow degrees uprose the wondrous pile,
And long successive ages roll'd the while,
Till, ceaseless in its growth, it claim'd to stand
Tall as its rival mountains on the land.
Thus stood, and, unremovable by skill,
Or force of man, had stood the structure still;
But that, though firmly fixt, supplanted yet

By pressure of its own enormous weight,
It left the shelving beach,—and with a sound
That shook the bellowing waves and rocks around,
Self-launch'd, and swiftly, to the briny wave,
As if instinct with strong desire to lave,
Down went the ponderous mass. So bards of old,
How Delos swam the Ægean deep, have told.
But not of ice was Delos. Delos bore
Herb, fruit, and flower. She, crown'd with laurel, wore
Even under wintry skies, a summer smile;
And Delos was Apollo's favourite isle.
But, horrid wanderers of the deep, to you
He deems Cimmerian darkness only due.
Your hated birth he deign'd not to survey,
But, scornful, turn'd his glorious eyes away.
Hence! Seek your home, nor longer rashly dare
The darts of Phœbus, and a softer air;
Lest ye regret, too late, your native coast,
In no congenial gulf for ever lost!

MONTES GLACIALES,

IN OCEANO GERMANICO NATANTES.

March 11, 1799.

En, quæ prodigia, ex oris allata remotis,
Oras adveniunt pavefacta per æquora nostras!
Non equidem priscæ sæclum rediisse videtur
Pyrrhæ, cum Proteus pecus altos visere montes
Et sylvas, egit. Sed tempora vix leviora
Adsunt, evulsi quando radicitus alti
In mare descendunt montes, fluctusque pererrant.
Quid verò hoc monstri est magis et mirabile visu?
Splendentes video, ceu pulchro ex ære vel auro
Conflatos, rutilisque accinctos undique gemmis,
Baccâ cæruleâ, et flammas imitante pyropo.
Ex oriente adsunt, ubi gazas optima tellus
Parturit omnigenas, quibus æva per omnia sumptu
Ingenti finxêre sibi diademata reges?
Vix hoc crediderim. Non fallunt talia acutos

Mercatorum oculos: prius et quàm littora Gangis
Liquissent, avidis gratissima præda fuissent.
Ortos unde putemus? An illos Ves'vius atrox
Protulit, ignivomisve ejecit faucibus Ætna?
Luce micant propriâ, Phœbive, per aëra purum
Nunc stimulantis equos, argentea tela retorquent?
Phœbi luce micant. Ventis et fluctibus altis
Appulsi, et rapidis subter currentibus undis,
Tandem non fallunt oculos. Capita alta videre est
Multâ onerata nive et canis conspersa pruinis.
Cætera sunt glacies. Procul hinc, ubi Bruma ferè omnes
Contristat menses, portenta hæc horrida nobis
Illa strui voluit. Quoties de culmine summo
Clivorum fluerent in littora prona, solutæ
Sole, nives, propero tendentes in mare cursu,
Illa gelu fixit. Paulatim attollere sese
Mirum cœpit opus; glacieque ab origine rerum
In glaciem aggestâ sublimes vertice tandem
Æquavit montes, non crescere nescia moles.
Sic immensa diu stetit, æternumque stetisset,
Congeries, hominum neque vi neque mobilis arte,
Littora ni tandem declivia deseruisset,
Pondere victa suo. Dilabitur. Omnia circum
Antra et saxa gemunt, subito concussa fragore,
Dum ruit in pelagum, tanquam studiosa natandi,
Ingens tota strues. Sic Delos dicitur olim,
Insula, in Ægæo fluitâsse erratica ponto.
Sed non ex glacie Delos; neque torpida Delum
Bruma inter rupes genuit nudum sterilemque.
Sed vestita herbis erat illa, ornataque nunquam
Deciduâ lauro; et Dolum dilexit Apollo.
At vos, errones horrendi, et caligine digni
Cimmeriâ, Deus idem odit. Natalia vestra,
Nubibus involvens frontem, non ille tueri
Sustinuit. Patrium vos ergo requirite cælum!
Ite! Redite! Timete moras; ni lenitèr austro
Spirante, et nitidas Phœbo jaculante sagittas
Hostili vobis, pereatis gurgite misti!

THE SALAD. BY VIRGIL.

June 8, 1799.

The winter night now well nigh worn away,
The wakeful cock proclaim'd approaching day,
When Simulus, poor tenant of a farm
Of narrowest limits, heard the shrill alarm,
Yawn'd, stretch'd his limbs, and anxious to provide
Against the pangs of hunger unsupplied,
By slow degrees his tatter'd bed forsook,
And poking in the dark, explored the nook
Where embers slept with ashes heap'd around,
And with burnt fingers'-ends the treasure found.
It chanced that from a brand beneath his nose,
Sure proof of latent fire, some smoke arose;
When trimming with a pin the incrusted tow,
And stooping it towards the coals below,
He toils, with cheeks distended, to excite
The lingering flame, and gains at length a light.
With prudent heed he spreads his hand before
The quivering lamp, and opes his granary door.
Small was his stock, but taking for the day,
A measured stint of twice eight pounds away,
With these his mill he seeks. A shelf at hand,
Fixt in the wall, affords his lamp a stand:
Then baring both his arms, a sleeveless coat
He girds, the rough exuviæ of a goat;
And with a rubber, for that use design'd,
Cleansing his mill within, begins to grind;
Each hand has its employ; labouring amain,
This turns the winch, while that supplies the grain.
The stone revolving rapidly, now glows,
And the bruised corn a mealy current flows;
While he, to make his heavy labour light,
Tasks oft his left hand to relieve his right;
And chants with rudest accent, to beguile
His ceaseless toil, as rude a strain the while.
And now, "Dame Cybale, come forth!" he cries;
But Cybale, still slumbering, nought replies.
From Afric she, the swain's sole serving-maid,
Whose face and form alike her birth betray'd;

With woolly locks, lips tumid, sable skin,
Wide bosom, udders flaccid, belly thin,
Legs slender, broad and most misshapen feet,
Chapp'd into chinks, and parch'd with solar heat.
Such, summon'd oft, she came ; at his command
Fresh fuel heap'd, the sleeping embers fann'd,
And made in haste her simmering skillet steam,
Replenish'd newly from the neighbouring stream.
  The labours of the mill perform'd, a sieve
The mingled flour and bran must next receive,
Which shaken oft, shoots Ceres through refined,
And better dress'd, her husks all left behind.
This done, at once, his future plain repast,
Unleaven'd, on a shaven board he cast,
With tepid lymph, first largely soak'd it all,
Then gather'd it with both hands to a ball,
And spreading it again with both hands wide,
With sprinkled salt the stiffen'd mass supplied ;
At length, the stubborn substance, duly wrought,
Takes from his palms impress'd the shape it ought,
Becomes an orb, and quarter'd into shares,
The faithful mark of just division bears.
Last, on his hearth it finds convenient space,
For Cybale before had swept the place,
And there, with tiles and embers overspread,
She leaves it—reeking in its sultry bed.
  Nor Similus, while Vulcan thus, alone,
His part perform'd, proves heedless of his own,
But sedulous, not merely to subdue
His hunger, but to please his palate too,
Prepares more savoury food. His chimney-side
Could boast no gammon, salted well, and dried,
And hook'd behind him ; but sufficient store
Of bundled anise, and a cheese it bore ;
A broad round cheese, which, through its centre strung
With a tough broom-twig, in the corner hung ;
The prudent hero therefore with address,
And quick dispatch, now seeks another mess.
  Close to his cottage lay a garden-ground,
With reeds and osiers sparely girt around ;

Small was the spot, but liberal to produce,
Nor wanted aught that serves a peasant's use;
And sometimes even the rich would borrow thence,
Although its tillage was his sole expense.
For oft, as from his toils abroad he ceased,
Home-bound by weather or some stated feast,
His debt of culture here he duly paid,
And only left the plough to wield the spade.
He knew to give each plant the soil it needs,
To drill the ground, and cover close the seeds;
And could with ease compel the wanton rill
To turn, and wind, obedient to his will.
There flourish'd star-wort, and the branching beet,
The sorrel acid, and the mallow sweet,
The skirret, and the leek's aspiring kind,
The noxious poppy—quencher of the mind!
Salubrious sequel of a sumptuous board,
The lettuce, and the long huge-bellied gourd;
But these (for none his appetite controll'd
With stricter sway) the thrifty rustic sold;
With broom-twigs neatly bound, each kind apart,
He bore them ever to the public mart;
Whence, laden still, but with a lighter load,
Of cash well earn'd, he took his homeward road,
Expending seldom, ere he quitted Rome,
His gains, in flesh-meat for a feast at home.
There, at no cost, on onions, rank and red,
Or the curl'd endive's bitter leaf, he fed;
On scallions sliced, or with a sensual gust
On rockets—foul provocatives of lust;
Nor even shunn'd, with smarting gums, to press
Nasturtium, pungent face-distorting mess!
  Some such regale now also in his thought,
With hasty steps his garden-ground he sought;
There delving with his hands, he first displaced
Four plants of garlick, large, and rooted fast;
The tender tops of parsley next he culls,
Then the old rue-bush shudders as he pulls,
And coriander last to these succeeds,
That hangs on slightest threads her trembling seeds.

Placed near his sprightly fire, he now demands
The mortar at his sable servant's hands;
When stripping all his garlick first, he tore
The exterior coats, and cast them on the floor,
Then cast away with like contempt the skin,
Flimsier concealment of the cloves within.
These search'd, and perfect found, he one by one
Rinsed and disposed within the hollow stone;
Salt added, and a lump of salted cheese,
With his injected herbs he cover'd these,
And tucking with his left his tunic tight,
And seizing fast the pestle with his right,
The garlick bruising first he soon express'd,
And mix'd the various juices of the rest.
He grinds, and by degrees his herbs below
Lost in each other their own powers forego,
And with the cheese in compound, to the sight
Nor wholly green appear, nor wholly white.
His nostrils oft the forceful fume resent;
He cursed full oft his dinner for its scent,
Or with wry faces, wiping as he spoke
The trickling tears, cried—"Vengeance on the smoke!"
The work proceeds: not roughly turns he now
The pestle, but in circles smooth and slow;
With cautious hand that grudges what it spills,
Some drops of olive-oil he next instils;
Then vinegar with caution scarcely less;
And gathering to a ball the medley mess,
Last, with two fingers frugally applied,
Sweeps the small remnant from the mortar's side:
And thus complete in figure and in kind,
Obtains at length the Salad he design'd.
And now black Cybale before him stands,
The cake drawn newly glowing in her hands:
He glad receives it, chasing far away
All fears of famine for the passing day;
His legs enclosed in buskins, and his head
In its tough casque of leather, forth he led
And yoked his steers, a dull obedient pair,
Then drove afield, and plunged the pointed share.

THE CAST-AWAY.

March 20, 1799.

Obscurest night involved the sky,
  The Atlantic billows roar'd,
When such a destined wretch as I,
  Wash'd headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home for ever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast
  Than he, with whom he went,
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast
  With warmer wishes sent.
He loved them both, but both in vain,
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the whelming brine,
  Expert to swim, he lay;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
  Or courage die away;
But waged with death a lasting strife,
Supported by despair of life.

He shouted: nor his friends had fail'd
  To check the vessel's course,
But so the furious blast prevail'd,
  That pitiless perforce,
They left their outcast mate behind,
And scudded still before the wind.

Some succour yet they could afford;
  And, such as storms allow,
The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
  Delay'd not to bestow.
But he (they knew) nor ship nor shore,
Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

Nor, cruel as it seem'd, could he
  Their haste himself condemn,
Aware that flight, in such a sea,
  Alone could rescue them;

Yet bitter felt it still to die
Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

He long survives, who lives an hour
  In ocean, self-upheld;
And so long he, with unspent power,
  His destiny repell'd;
And ever as the minutes flew,
Entreated help, or cried—"Adieu!"

At length, his transient respite past,
  His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in every blast,
  Could catch the sound no more:
For then, by toil subdued, he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

No poet wept him; but the page
  Of narrative sincere,
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
  Is wet with Anson's tear:
And tears by bards or heroes shed
Alike immortalize the dead.

I therefore purpose not, or dream,
  Descanting on his fate,
To give the melancholy theme
  A more enduring date:
But misery still delights to trace
Its 'semblance in another's case.

No voice divine the storm allay'd,
  No light propitious shone,
When, snatch'd from all effectual aid,
  We perish'd, each alone:
But I beneath a rougher sea,
And whelm'd in deeper gulfs than he.

MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTION

TO

WILLIAM NORTHCOT.

HIC sepultus est
Inter suorum lacrymas
GULIELMUS NORTHCOT,
GULIELMI et MARIÆ filius
Unicus, unicè dilectus,
Qui floris ritu succisus est semihiantis,
Aprilis die septimo,
1780, Æt. 10.

Care, vale! Sed non æternum, care, valeto!
Namque iterum tecum, sim modò dignus, ero.
Tum nihil amplexus poterit divellere nostros,
Nec tu marcesces, nec lacrymabor ego.

TRANSLATION.

FAREWELL! "But not for ever," Hope replies,
Trace but his steps and meet him in the skies!
There nothing shall renew our parting pain,
Thou shalt not wither, nor I weep again.

A RIDDLE.

I AM just two and two, I am warm, I am cold,
And the parent of numbers that cannot be told.
I am lawful, unlawful—a duty, a fault,
I am often sold dear, good for nothing when bought;
An extraordinary boon, and a matter of course,
And yielded with pleasure when taken by force.

ANSWER.

FROM THE GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE, VOL. LXXVI. P. 1224.

A RIDDLE by Cowper
Made me swear like a trooper;
But my anger, alas! was in vain;
For remembering the bliss
Of beauty's soft Kiss,
I now long for such riddles again. J. T.

IN SEDITIONEM HORRENDAM,

CORRUPTELIS GALLICIS UT FERTUR, LONDINI NUPER EXORTAM.

PERFIDA, crudelis, victa et lymphata furore,
  Non armis, laurum Gallia fraude petit.
Venalem pretio plebem conducit, et urit
  Undique privatas patriciasque domos.
Nequicquam conata suâ, fœdissima sperat
  Posse tamen nostrâ nos superare manu.
Gallia, vana struis! Precibus nunc utere! Vinces,
  Nam mites timidis supplicibusque sumus.

TRANSLATION.

FALSE, cruel, disappointed, stung to the heart,
France quits the warrior's for the assassin's part,
To dirty hands a dirty bribe conveys,
Bids the low street and lofty palace blaze.
Her sons, too weak to vanquish us alone,
She hires the worst and basest of our own.
Kneel, France! a suppliant conquers us with ease,
We always spare a coward on his knees.

COWPER had sinn'd with some excuse,
  If, bound in rhyming tethers,
He had committed this abuse
  Of changing ewes for wethers[1];

But, male for female is a trope,
  Or rather bold misnomer,
That would have startled even Pope,
  When he translated Homer.

[1] I have heard about my wether mutton from various quarters. It was a blunder hardly pardonable in a man who has lived amid fields and meadows, grazed by sheep, almost these thirty years. I have accordingly satirized myself in two stanzas which I composed last night, while I lay awake, tormented with pain, and well dosed with laudanum. If you find them not very brilliant, therefore, you will know how to account for it.—*Letter to Joseph Hill, April* 15, 1792.

STANZAS

SUBJOINED TO THE YEARLY BILL OF MORTALITY OF THE PARISH OF ALL-SAINTS, NORTHAMPTON[1],

ANNO DOMINI 1787.

Pallida Mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas,
Regumque turres. HORACE.

Pale Death with equal foot strikes wide the door
Of royal halls and hovels of the poor.

WHILE thirteen moons saw smoothly run
The Nen's barge-laden wave,
All these, life's rambling journey done,
Have found their home, the grave.

Was man (frail always) made more frail
Than in foregoing years?
Did famine or did plague prevail,
That so much death appears?

No; these were vigorous as their sires,
Nor plague nor famine came;
This annual tribute Death requires,
And never waives his claim.

Like crowded forest-trees we stand,
And some are mark'd to fall;
The axe will smite at God's command,
And soon shall smite us all.

Green as the bay tree, ever green,
With its new foliage on,
The gay, the thoughtless, have I seen,
I pass'd,—and they were gone.

Read, ye that run, the aweful truth
With which I charge my page!
A worm is in the bud of youth,
And at the root of age.

[1] Composed for John Cox, parish clerk of Northampton.

No present health can health insure
  For yet an hour to come;
No medicine, though it oft can cure,
  Can always balk the tomb.

And oh! that humble as my lot,
  And scorn'd as is my strain,
These truths, though known, too much forgot,
  I may not teach in vain.

So prays your Clerk with all his heart,
  And, ere he quits the pen,
Begs you for once to take his part,
  And answer all—Amen!

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

For the Year 1788.

Quod adest, memento
Componere æquus. Cætera fluminis
Ritu feruntur. Horace.

Improve the present hour, for all beside
Is a mere feather on a torrent's tide.

Could I, from Heaven inspired, as sure presage
  To whom the rising year shall prove his last,
As I can number in my punctual page,
  And item down the victims of the past;

How each would trembling wait the mournful sheet
  On which the press might stamp him next to die;
And, reading here his sentence, how replete
  With anxious meaning, heavenward turn his eye!

Time then would seem more precious than the joys
  In which he sports away the treasure now;
And prayer more seasonable than the noise
  Of drunkards, or the music-drawing bow.

Then doubtless many a trifler, on the brink
  Of this world's hazardous and headlong shore,
Forced to a pause, would feel it good to think,
  Told that his setting sun must rise no more.

Ah self-deceived! Could I prophetic say
  Who next is fated, and who next to fall,
The rest might then seem privileged to play;
  But, naming none, the Voice now speaks to all.

Observe the dappled foresters, how light
  They bound and airy o'er the sunny glade;
One falls—the rest, wide scatter'd with affright,
  Vanish at once into the darkest shade.

Had we their wisdom, should we, often warn'd,
  Still need repeated warnings, and at last,
A thousand aweful admonitions scorn'd,
  Die self-accused of life run all to waste?

Sad waste! for which no after-thrift atones!
  The grave admits no cure for guilt or sin;
Dewdrops may deck the turf that hides the bones,
  But tears of godly grief ne'er flow within.

Learn then, ye living! by the mouths be taught
  Of all those sepulchres, instructors true,
That, soon or late, death also is your lot,
  And the next opening grave may yawn for you.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

For the Year 1789.

—*Placidaque ibi demum morte quievit.* Virg.
There calm at length he breathed his soul away.

"O most delightful hour by man
  Experienced here below,
The hour that terminates his span,
  His folly and his woe!

"Worlds should not bribe me back to tread
  Again life's dreary waste,
To see again my day o'erspread
  With all the gloomy past.

"My home henceforth is in the skies,
  Earth, seas, and sun, adieu!
All heaven unfolded to my eyes,
  I have no sight for you."

So spake Aspasio, firm possess'd
  Of faith's supporting rod
Then breathed his soul into its rest,
  The bosom of his God.

He was a man among the few
  Sincere on virtue's side;
And all his strength from Scripture drew,
  To hourly use applied.

That rule he prized, by that he fear'd,
  He hated, hoped, and loved;
Nor ever frown'd, or sad appear'd,
  But when his heart had roved.

For he was frail as thou or I,
  And evil felt within:
But when he felt it, heaved a sigh,
  And loathed the thought of sin.

Such lived Aspasio; and at last
  Call'd up from earth to heaven,
The gulf of death triumphant pass'd,
  By gales of blessing driven.

His joys be mine, each Reader cries,
  When my last hour arrives:
They shall be yours, my verse replies,
  Such only be your lives.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

For the Year 1790.

Ne commonentem recta sperne. Buchanan.
Despise not my good counsel.

He who sits from day to day
  Where the prison'd lark is hung,
Heedless of his loudest lay,
  Hardly knows that he has sung.

Where the watchman in his round
  Nightly lifts his voice on high,
None accustom'd to the sound,
  Wakes the sooner for his cry.

So your verse-man I, and Clerk,
  Yearly in my song proclaim
Death at hand—yourselves his mark—
  And the foe's unerring aim.

Duly at my time I come,
  Publishing to all aloud,—
Soon the grave must be your home,
  And your only suit a shroud.

But the monitory strain,
  Oft repeated in your ears,
Seems to sound too much in vain,
  Wins no notice, wakes no fears.

Can a truth, by all confess'd
  Of such magnitude and weight,
Grow, by being oft impress'd,
  Trivial as a parrot's prate?

Pleasure's call attention wins,
  Hear it often as we may;
New as ever seem our sins,
  Though committed every day.

Death and judgement, heaven and hell—
  These alone, so often heard,
No more move us than the bell
  When some stranger is interr'd.

O then, ere the turf or tomb
  Cover us from every eye,
Spirit of instruction! come,
  Make us learn that we must die.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

For the Year 1792.

Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari!

Virg.

Happy the mortal who has traced effects
To their first cause, cast fear beneath his feet,
And Death and roaring Hell's voracious fires!

Thankless for favours from on high,
  Man thinks he fades too soon;
Though 'tis his privilege to die,
  Would he improve the boon.

But he, not wise enough to scan
  His blest concerns aright,
Would gladly stretch life's little span
  To ages, if he might;

To ages in a world of pain,
  To ages, where he goes
Gall'd by affliction's heavy chain,
  And hopeless of repose.

Strange fondness of the human heart,
  Enamour'd of its harm!
Strange world, that costs it so much smart,
  And still has power to charm.

Whence has the world her magic power?
  Why deem we death a foe?
Recoil from weary life's best hour,
  And covet longer woe?

The cause is Conscience :—Conscience oft
  Her tale of guilt renews;
Her voice is terrible though soft,
  And dread of death ensues.

Then anxious to be longer spared,
  Man mourns his fleeting breath:
All evils then seem light compared
  With the approach of Death.

'Tis judgement shakes him; there's the fear
  That prompts the wish to stay:
He has incurr'd a long arrear,
  And must despair to pay.

Pay?—follow Christ, and all is paid;
  His death your peace ensures;
Think on the grave where he was laid,
  And calm descend to yours.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

For the Year 1793.

De sacris autem hæc sit una sententia, ut conserventur.

Cic. de Leg.

But let us all concur in this one sentiment, that things sacred be inviolate.

He lives who lives to God alone,
  And all are dead beside;
For other source than God is none
  Whence life can be supplied.

To live to God is to requite
  His love as best we may;
To make his precepts our delight,
  His promises our stay.

But life, within a narrow ring
  Of giddy joys comprised,
Is falsely named, and no such thing,
  But rather death disguised.

Can life in them deserve the name,
  Who only live to prove
For what poor toys they can disclaim
  An endless life above?

Who, much diseased, yet nothing feel;
  Much menaced, nothing dread;
Have wounds which only God can heal,
  Yet never ask his aid?

Who deem his house a useless place,
  Faith, want of common sense;
And ardour in the Christian race,
  A hypocrite's pretence?

Who trample order; and the day
  Which God asserts his own
Dishonour with unhallow'd play,
  And worship chance alone?

If scorn of God's commands, impress'd
  On word and deed, imply
The better part of man unbless'd
  With life that cannot die;

Such want it, and that want, uncured
  Till man resigns his breath,
Speaks him a criminal, assured
  Of everlasting death.

Sad period to a pleasant course!
  Yet so will God repay
Sabbaths profaned without remorse,
  And mercy cast away.

ADAM:

A SACRED DRAMA.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN OF GIO. BATTISTA ANDREINI.

TO THE COURTEOUS READER.

Having satiated and fatigued my eyes, gentle reader, by too intent an observation of what is passing on earth; and raising therefore my thoughts to higher contemplations, to the wonders diffused by the supreme Being, for the benefit of man, through the universe; I felt my heart penetrated by a certain Christian compunction, in reflecting how his inexpressible goodness, though perpetually and grievously offended by us, still shows itself in the highest degree indulgent towards us in preserving those wonders with a continual influence to our advantage; and how on the first provocation to vengeance, Almighty power does not enlarge the ocean to pass its immense boundary, does not obscure the light of the sun, does not impress sterility on the earth, to ingulf us, to blind us, and finally to destroy us. Softened and absorbed in these divine emotions, I felt myself transported and hurried by a delightful violence into a terrestial paradise, where I seemed to behold the first man Adam, a creature dear to God, the friend of Angels, the heir of heaven, familiar with the stars, a compendium of all created things, the ornament of all, the miracle of nature, the lord of the animals, the only inhabitant of the universe, and enjoyer of a scene so wonderfully grand. Whence charmed more than ever, I resolved with the favour of the blessed God, to usher into the light of the world, what I bore in the darkness of my imagination; both to render it known in some measure, that, I know myself, and the infinite obligations that I

have to God; and that others, who do not know, may learn, the true nature of man, and from the low contemplation of earthly things, may raise their minds to things celestial and divine.

I remained however a considerable time in doubt if I ought, or if I were able to undertake a composition most difficult to me on many accounts, since in beginning the sacred subject from man's creation to the point where he is driven from the terrestrial paradise, a period of six years, (as St. Augustine relates in his book on the City of God,) I did not clearly perceive, how an action so brief, could be formed into five acts, especially allowing to every act the number of at least six or seven scenes, —difficult from the dispute that the Devil maintained with Eve, first, that he might induce her to eat the apple, since we have only the text that mentions it, in saying "*nequaquam moriemini, et eritis sicut Dii scientes bonum et malum,*"—difficult from the words of Eve in persuading Adam (who had indeed the gift of knowledge infused,) to taste the apple;—but difficult above all, from my own infirmity, since the composition must remain deprived of those poetic ornaments, so dear to the muses; deprived of the power to draw comparisons from implements of art introduced in the course of years, since in the time of the first man there was no such thing: deprived also of naming, (at least while Adam speaks, or discourse is held with him,) for example, bows, arrows, hatchets, urns, knives, swords, spears, trumpets, drums, trophies, banners, lists, hammers, torches, bellows, funeral piles, theatres, exchequers, infinite things of a like nature, introduced by the necessities of sin; and yet, as circumstances of affliction and punishment, they ought not to pass through the mind or through the lips of Adam, although he had knowledge infused into him, as one who lived most happy in a state of innocence: deprived moreover of introducing points of history sacred or profane, of relating fictions of fabulous deities, of rehearsing loves, furies, sports of hunting or fishing, triumphs, shipwrecks, conflagrations, enchantments, and things of a like nature, that are in truth the ornament and the soul of poetry: difficult from not knowing in what style Adam ought to speak, since in respect to his knowledge it might be proper to assign to him verses of a high majestic and flowing style; but considering him as a shepherd and inhabitant of the woods, it appears that he should be

simple and sweet in his discourse, and I endeavoured on that account to render it such, as much as I could by variety of versification. And here taking courage in my greatest doubt, I formed, I know not how, a beginning ; I advanced, if I may say so, without any determinate plan : and arrived at the end before I was aware. Whence I am inclined to believe that the favour of God, regarding rather my good intention than my defects, (for as he often withdraws the heart of man from evil, so he conducts it insensibly to good,) gave direction to my hand, and completed my work. Wherefore to that alone I am indebted for the little grace that may perhaps be found in the present labour ; knowing, that as Omnipotence is accustomed to produce wonders from the rude and unformed chaos, so, from the still ruder chaos of my mind, it may have called forth this production, if not for any other purpose, yet to be sacred and to make as it were a mute speak in my person, in despite of poverty of genius, as on the other hand it is accustomed to strike mute the most eloquent tongues when they employ themselves on subjects low and profane. Let it be surveyed, therefore, with an eye of indulgence, and blame not the poverty of style, the want of dignity in the conduct of the circumstances, sterility of conceits, weakness of spirit, insipid jokes and extravagant episodes, to mention (without speaking of an infinitude of other things,) that the world, the flesh, and the devil, present themselves in human shapes to tempt Adam, since there was then in the universe no other man or woman, and the serpent discovered himself to Eve with a human similitude ; moreover this is done, that the subject may be comprehended by the understanding through the medium of the senses : since the great temptations that Adam and Eve at once sustained, were indeed in the interior of their own mind, but could not be so comprehended by the spectator ; nor is it to be believed that the serpent held a long dispute with Eve, since he tempted her rather by a suggestion to her mind than by the conference, saying these words, "*nequaquam moriemini, et eritis sicut Dii scientes bonum et malum,*" and yet it will be necessary, in order to express those internal contentions, to find some expedient to give them an outward representation. But, if it is permitted to the painter, who is a dumb poet, to express by colours God the Father under the person of a man silvered by age, and to describe under the image of a white dove the purity of the

Spirit, and to figure the divine messengers or Angels in the shape of winged youths; why is it not permitted to the poet, who is a speaking painter, to represent in his theatrical production another man and another woman besides Adam and Eve, and to represent their internal conflicts through the medium of images and voices entirely human? not to mention that it appears more allowable to introduce in this work the Devil under a human shape, than it is to introduce into it the Eternal Father, and even an Angel; and if this is permitted, and seen every day exhibited in sacred representations, why should it not be allowed in the present, where, if the greater evil is allowable, surely the lesser should be allowed? Attend therefore, gentle reader, more to the substance than to the accident, considering in the work the great end of introducing into the theatre of the soul the misery and lamentation of Adam to make your heart a spectator of them, in order to raise it from these dregs of earth to the magnificence of heaven, through the medium of virtue and the assistance of God; by whom may you be blessed!

ADAM.

THE CHARACTERS.

Chorus of Seraphim; Cherubim, and Angels.
The Archangel Michael.
Adam.
Eve.
A Cherub, the Guardian of Adam.
Lucifer.
Satan.
Beelzebub.
Seven Mortal Sins.
The World.
The Flesh.
Famine.
Labour.
Despair.
Death.
Vain Glory.
The Serpent.
Volano, an Infernal Messenger.
A Chorus of Phantoms.
A Chorus of Fiery, Airy, Aquatic, and Infernal Spirits.

CHORUS OF ANGELS

SINGING THE GLORY OF GOD.

To Heaven's bright lyre let Iris be the bow,
Adapt the spheres for chords, for notes the stars;
Let new-born gales discriminate the bars,
Nor let old Time to measure times be slow.
Hence to new Music of the eternal Lyre
Add richer harmony and praise to praise;
For him who now his wondrous might displays,
And shows the Universe its aweful Sire.
O Thou who ere the World or Heaven was made,
Didst in thyself, that World, that Heaven enjoy,
How does thy bounty all its powers employ;
What inexpressive good hast thou display'd!
O Thou of sovereign love almighty source,
Who know'st to make thy works thy love express,
Let pure devotion's fire the soul possess,
And give the heart and hand a kindred force.

Then shalt thou hear how, when the world began,
Thy life-producing voice gave myriads birth,
Call'd forth from nothing all in Heaven and Earth,
Bless'd in thy light as Eagles in the Sun.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE THE FIRST.

GOD THE FATHER—CHORUS OF ANGELS.

RAISE from this dark abyss thy horrid visage,
O Lucifer! aggrieved by light so potent,
Shrink from the blaze of these refulgent planets,
And pant beneath the rays of no fierce sun;
Read in the sacred volumes of the sky,
The mighty wonders of a hand divine.
Behold, thou frantic rebel,
How easy is the task,
To the great Sire of Worlds,
To raise his empyrean seat sublime:
Lifting humility
Thither whence pride hath fallen.
From thence with bitter grief,
Inhabitant of fire, and mole of darkness,
Let the perverse behold,
Despairing his escape and my compassion,
His own perdition in another's good,
And Heaven now closed to him, to others open'd;
And sighing from the bottom of his heart,
Let him in homage to my power exclaim,
Ah, this creative Sire,
(Wretch as I am) I see,
Hath need of nothing but himself alone
To re-establish all.

THE SERAPHIM SING.

O scene worth heavenly musing,
With sun and moon their glorious light diffusing;
Where to angelic voices,
Sphere circling sphere rejoices,
How dost thou rise, exciting

Man to fond contemplation
Of his benign creation!

THE CHERUBIM SING.

The volume of the stars,
The sovereign Author plann'd,
Inscribing it with his eternal hand,
And his benignant aim
Their beams in lucid characters proclaim;
And man in these delighting,
Feels their bright beams inviting,
And seems, though prison'd in these mortal bars,
Walking on earth to mingle with the stars.

GOD THE FATHER.

Angels, desert your Heaven! with you to Earth,
That Power descends, whom Heaven accompanies;
Let each spectator of these works sublime
Behold, with meek devotion,
Earth into flesh transform'd, and clay to man,
Man to a sovereign lord,
And souls to seraphim.

THE SERAPHIM SING.

Now let us cleave the sky with wings of gold,
The world be paradise,
Since to its fruitful breast
Now the great Sovereign of our quire descends;
Now let us cleave the sky with wings of gold;
Strew yourselves flowers beneath the step divine,
Ye rivals of the stars!
Summon'd from every sphere
Ye gems of heaven, heaven's radiant wealth appear;
Now let us cleave the sky with wings of gold!

GOD THE FATHER.

Behold, ye springing herbs and new-born flowers,
The step that used to press the stars alone
And the sun's spacious road,
This day begins, along the sylvan scene,
To leave its grand impression;
To low materials now I stretch my hand,
To form a work sublime.

THE ANGELS SING.

Lament, lament in anguish,
Angel to God rebellious!
See, on a sudden rise
The creature doom'd to fill thy radiant seat!
Foolish thy pride took fire
Contemplating thy birth;
But he o'er pride shall triumph,
Acknowledging he sprung from humble dust.
From hence he shall acquire
As much as thou hast lost;
Since the Supreme Inhabitant of Heaven
Receives the humble, and dethrones the proud.

GOD THE FATHER.

Adam, arise, since I to thee impart
A spirit warm from my benignant breath;
Arise, arise, first man,
And joyous let the world
Embrace its living miniature in thee!
ADAM. O marvels new, O hallow'd, O divine,
Eternal object of the angel host:
Why do I not possess tongues numerous
As now the stars in heaven?
Now then, before
A thing of earth so mean,
See I the great Artificer divine?
Mighty Ruler supernal,
If 'tis denied this tongue
To match my obligation with my thanks,
Behold my heart's affection,
And hear it speaking clearer than my tongue,
And to thee bending lower
Than this my humble knee.
Now, now, O Lord, in ecstasy devout,
Let my mind mount, and passing all the clouds,
Passing each sphere, even up to heaven ascend,
And there behold the stars, a seat for man!
Thou Lord, who all the fire of genuine love
Convertest to thyself,

Transform me into thee, that I a part
Even of thyself, may thus acquire the power
To offer praises not unworthy thee.

THE ANGELS SING.

To smile in paradise,
Great demigod of earth, direct thy step;
There like the tuneful spheres,
Circle the murmuring rills
Of limpid water bright;
There the melodious birds
Rival angelic quires;
There lovely flowers profuse
Appear as vivid stars;
The snowy rose is there
A silver moon, the heliotrope a sun:
What more can be desired,
By earth's new lord in fair corporeal vest,
Than in the midst of earth to find a heaven?

ADAM. O ye harmonious birds!
Bright scene of lovely flowers.
But what delightful slumber
Falls on my closing eyes?
I lay me down, adieu
Unclouded light of day, sweet air adieu!

GOD THE FATHER.

Adam, behold I come,
Son dear to me, thou son
Of an indulgent sire;
Behold the hand that never works in vain:
Behold the hand that join'd the elements,
That added heaven to heavens,
That fill'd the stars with light,
Gave lustre to the moon,
Prescribed the sun his course,
And now supports the world,
And forms a solid stage for thy firm step.
Now sleeping, Adam from thy open'd side
The substance I will take
That shall have woman's name, and lovely form.

THE ANGELS SING.

Immortal works of an immortal Maker!
Ye high and blessed seats
Of this delightful world,
Ye starry seats of heaven,
Trophies divine, productions pre-ordain'd:
O power! O energy!
Which out of shadowy horror form'd the Sun!
  EVE. What heavenly melody pervades my heart,
Ere yet the sound my ear! inviting me
To gaze on wonders, what do I behold,
What transformations new;
Is earth become the heaven?
Do I behold his light
Whose splendour dazzles the meridian sun?
Am I the creature of that plastic hand,
Who form'd of nought the angels and the heavens?
Thou sovereign Lord! whom lowly I adore,
A love so tender penetrates my heart,
That while my tongue ventures on utterance,
The words with difficulty
Find passage from my lips;
For in a tide of tears,
(That sighs have caused to flow) they seem absorb'd.
Thou pure celestial love
Of the benignant power,
Who pleased to manifest on earth his glory,
Now to this world descends,
To draw from abject clay
The governor of all created things:
Lord of the hallow'd and concealed affection,
Thou in whom love glows with such fervent flame,
Inspirit even my tongue
With suitable reply, that these dear vales
And sylvan scenes may hear
Thanks, that to thee I should devote, my Sire,
But if my tongue be mute, speak thou, my heart.

GOD THE FATHER.

Adam, awake! and cease
To meditate in rapturous trance profound

Things holy and abstruse,
And the deep secrets of the Trinal Lord.

ADAM. Where am I? where have I been? what Sun
Of triple influence that dims the day
Now from my eye withdraws, where is he vanish'd?
O hallow'd miracles
Of this imperial seat,
Of these resplendent suns,
Which though divided, form
A single ray of light immeasureable,
Embellishing all Heaven,
And giving grace and lustre
To every winged Seraph;
Divine mysterious light,
Flowing from sovereign Good,
To him alone thou art known,
Who mounts to thee an eagle in his faith.
What rose of snowy hue and sacred form,
In these celestial bowers,
Wet with Empyreal dews, have I beheld
Opening its bosom to the suns! or rather
One of these suns making the rose its Heaven;
And in a moment's space,
(O marvels most sublime,)
With deluges of light,
And in a lily's form,
Rise from that lovely virgin bosom blest.
Can suns be lilies then,
And lilies children of the maiden rose?

GOD THE FATHER.

The Heaven's too lofty, and too low the world;
Suffice it that in vain
Man's humble intellect
Attempts to sound the depth of deeds divine:
Press in the fond embraces of thy heart
The consort of thy bosom,
And let her name be Eve.

ADAM. O my beloved companion,
Support of my existence,
My glory and my power,
Flesh of my flesh, and of my bone the bone,

Behold I clasp thy bosom
In plenitude of pure and hallow'd love.

GOD THE FATHER.

I leave you now, my children; rest in peace,
Receive my blessing, and so fruitful prove
That for your offspring earth may scarce suffice!
Man, be thou lord of all that now the sun
Warms or the ocean laves; impose a name
On every thing that flies, or runs, or swims.
Now through the ear descending to your soul
Receive the immutable decree; hear, Adam,
Let thy companion hear, and in your hearts
Made the abode of love,
Cherish the mighty word!
Of fruits whatever from a spreading branch
Each copious tree may offer to your hands,
Of dainty viands whatsoe'er abound
In this delightful garden,
This paradise of flowers,
The gay delight of man,
The treasure of the earth,
The wonder of the world, the work of God,
These, O my son, these thou art free to taste:
But of the Tree comprising Good and Evil
Under the pain of dying
To him who knows not death,
Be now the fruit forbidden!
I leave ye now, and through my airy road,
Departing from the world, return to Heaven.

THE SERAPHIM SING.

Let every airy cloud on earth descend,
And luminous and light
Repose with God upon this glowing sphere!
Then let the stars descend,
Descend the moon and sun,
Forming bright steps to the empyreal world,
And each rejoice that the supreme Creator
Has deign'd to visit what his hand produced.

ADAM. O scene of splendour, viewing which I see
The glories of my God in lovelier light,
How through my eyes do you console my heart!

See, at a single nod of our great Sire,
(Dear partner of my life,)
Fire bursting forth with elemental power!
The Sea, Heaven, Earth, their properties assume,
And air grows air, although there were before
Nor fire, nor heaven, nor air, nor earth, nor sea.
Behold the azure sky, in which ofttimes
The lovely glittering star
Shall wake the dawn, attired in heavenly light,
The herald of the morn,
To spread the boundless lustre of the day;
Then shall the radiant sun,
To gladden all the world,
Diffuse abroad his energy of light;
And when his eye is weary of the earth,
The pure and silvery moon
And the minuter stars
Shall form the pomp of night.
Behold where fire o'er every element,
Lucid and light, assumes its lofty seat!
Behold the simple field of spotless air
Made the support of variegated birds,
That with their tuneful notes
Guide the delightful hours!
See the great bosom of the fertile earth
With flowers embellish'd and with fruits mature!
See on her verdant brow she seems to bear
Hills as her crown, and as her sceptre trees!
Behold the ocean's fair cerulean plain,
That 'midst its humid sands and vales profound,
And 'midst its silent and its scaly tribes,
Rolls over buried gold and precious pearl,
And crimson coral raising to the sky
Its wavy head with herbs and amber crown'd!
Stupendous all proclaim
Their Maker's power and glory.

EVE. All manifest thy might,
O Architect divine!

ADAM. Dear partner, let us go
Where to invite our step
God's other wonders shine, a countless tribe.

SCENE THE SECOND.

LUCIFER. Who from my dark abyss
Calls me to gaze on this excess of light?
What miracles unseen
Show'st thou to me, O God?
Art thou then tired of residence in heaven?
Why hast thou form'd on earth
This lovely paradise?
And wherefore place in it
Two earthly demi-gods of human mould?
Say thou vile architect,
Forming thy work of dust,
What will befall this naked, helpless man,
The sole inhabitant of glens and woods?
Does he then dream of treading on the stars?
Heaven is impoverish'd, and I, alone
The cause, enjoy the ruin I produced.
Let him unite above
Star upon star, moon, sun,
And let his Godhead toil
To re-adorn and re-illume his Heaven!
Since in the end derision
Shall prove his works, and all his efforts vain:
For Lucifer alone was that full light
Which scatter'd radiance o'er the plains of heaven.
But these his present fires, are shade and smoke,
Base counterfeits of my more potent beams.
I reck not what he means to make his heaven,
Nor care I what his creature man may be.
Too obstinate and firm
Is my undaunted thought,
In proving that I am implacable
'Gainst Heaven, 'gainst Man, the Angels, and their God.

SCENE THE THIRD.

SATAN, BEELZEBUB, *and* LUCIFER.

SATAN. To light, to light to raise the embattled brows,
A symbol of the firm and generous heart
That ardent dwells in the unconquer'd breast.
Must we then suffer such excessive wrong?
And shall we not with hands, thus talon-arm'd,
Tear out the stars from their celestial seat;

And as our sign of conquest,
Down in our dark abyss
Shall we not force the sun, and moon to blaze,
Since we are those, who in dread feats of arms
Warring amongst the stars,
Made the bright face of Heaven turn pale with fear?
To arms! to arms! redoubted Beelzebub!
Ere yet 'tis heard around,
To our great wrong and memorable shame,
That by the race of man (mean child of clay)
The stars expect a new sublimity.

BEELZEBUB. I burn with such fierce flame,
Such stormy venom deluges my soul,
That with intestine rage
My groans like thunder sound, my looks are lightning,
And my extorted tears are fiery showers!
'Tis needful therefore from my brow to shake
The hissing serpents that o'erstrade my visage,
To gaze upon these mighty works of Heaven,
And the new demi-gods.
Silent be he, who thinks
(Now that this man is form'd,)
To imitate his voice and thus exclaim,
Distressful Satan, ye unhappy spirits,
How wretched is your lot, from being first,
Fallen and degenerate, lost as ye are;
Heaven was your station once, your seat the stars,
And your great Maker God!
Now abject wretches, having lost for ever,
Eternal morn and each celestial light,
Heaven calls you now the denizens of woe.
Instead of moving in the solar road,
You press the plains of everlasting night;
And for your golden tresses,
And looks angelical,
Your locks are snaky, and your glance malign,
Your burning lips a murky vapour breathe,
And every tongue now teems with blasphemy,
And all blaspheming raise
A cloud sulphureous of foam and fire;
Arm'd with the eagle's talon, feet of goat,
And dragon's wing, your residence in fire,

Profoundest Tartarus unblest and dark,
The theatre of anguish,
That shuts itself against the beams of day!
Since the dread angel, born to brook no law,
To desolate the sky
And raise the powers of Hell,
Ought to breathe sanguine fire, and on his brow
Display the ensign of sublimest horror.

SATAN. Though arm'd with talons keen, and eagle beak,
Snaky our tresses, and our aspect fierce,
Cloven our feet, our frames with horror plumed,
And though our deep abode
Be fix'd in shadowy scenes of darkest night,
Let us be Angels still in dignity;
As far surpassing others as the Lord
Of highest power, his low and humble slaves.
If far from heaven our pennons we expand,
Let us remember still
That we alone are lords, and they are slaves;
And that resigning meaner seats in heaven,
We in their stead have raised a royal throne
Immense and massy, where the mighty chief
Of all our legions higher lifts his brow,
Than the proud mountain that upholds your heaven;
And there with heaven still waging endless war,
Threatening the stars, our adversaries ever,
Bears a dread sceptre kindling into flame,
That while he wheels it round, darts forth a blaze
More dazzling than the sun's meridian ray.

LUCIFER. 'Tis time to show my power, my brave compeers,
Magnanimous and mighty
Angels endow'd with martial potency,
I know the grief that gives you living death,
Is to see man exalted
To stations so sublime,
That all created things to him submit;
Since ye already doubt,
That to those lofty seats of flaming glory,
(Our treasure once and pride, but now renounced,)
This pair shall one day rise
With all the numerous train
Of their posterity.

SATAN. Great Lord of the infernal deep abyss,
To thee I bow, and speak
The anguish of my soul,
That for this man, grows hourly more severe,
Fearing the Incarnation of the Word.

LUCIFER. Can it be true, that from so little dust
A deity shall rise!
That flesh, that deity, that lofty power,
That chains us to the deep?
To this vile clod of earth,
He who himself yet claims to be adored?
Shall angels then do homage thus to men?
And can then flesh impure
Give to angelic nature higher powers?
Can it be true, and to devise the mode
Escape our intellect, ours who so dear
Have bought the boast of wisdom?
I yet am He, I am,
Who would not suffer that above in heaven,
Your lofty nature should submit to outrage,
When that insensate wish
Possess'd the tyrant of the starry throne,
That you should prostrate fall,
Before the Incarnate Word:
I am that Spirit, I, who for your sake
Collecting dauntless courage to the north
Led you far distant from the senseless will,
Of him who boasts to have created heaven.
And ye are those, your ardour speaks you well,
And your bold hearts that o'er the host of heaven
Gave me assurance of proud victory.
Arise! let glory's flame
Blaze in your breast, nor be it ever heard,
That him whom ye disdain
To worship in the sky,
Ye stoop to worship in the depth of hell!
Such were your oaths to me,
By your inestimable worth in arms,
Your worth, alas, so great
That heaven itself deserved not to enjoy it.
Oh, 'twere an outrage and a shame too great,
Were we not ready to revenge it all;

I see already flaming in your looks,
The matchless valour of your ardent hearts;
Already see your pinions spread in air,
To overwhelm the world and highest heaven,
That, all creation sunk in the abyss,
This mortal may be found
Instantly crush'd, and buried in his birth.

SATAN. At length pronounce thy orders!
Say what thou wilt, and with a hundred tongues
Speak, speak! that instant in a hundred works
Satan may toil, and Hell strain all her powers.

LUCIFER. Behold, to smooth the rough and arduous way
By which they deem they may ascend to glory,
Behold a God assumes
A human form in vain!
A mode too prompt and easy,
To crush the race of mortals,
The ancient God affords to new-born man.
Nature herself too much inclines, or rather
Forces this creature, to support his life,
Frequent to feed on various viands; hence
Since on delicious dainties
His bitter fall depends,
He may be tempted now to fruit forbidden,
And by the paths of death,
As he was nothing once, return to nothing.

BEELZEBUB. Great Angel! greatly thought!

LUCIFER. Rather the noble spirit
Of higher towering thought prompts me to speak,
That God perchance indignant that his hands
Have stoop'd to stain themselves in abject clay,
Seeing how different angel is from man,
Repenting of his work,
Forbad him to support his frail existence
Upon this sweet allurement; hence to sin
Prompted by natural motives, though tyrannic,
He should himself the earth's destroyer prove,
Converting his vile clay to dust again;
And plucking up again
The rooted world, thus to the highest heaven
Open a faithful passage,
Repenting of his wrong to us of old

Its ornaments sublime!
SATAN. Pardon, O pardon, if my humble thought
Aspiring by my tongue
Too high, perhaps offend your sovereign ear!
Long as this man shall rest
Alive, and breathe on earth,
Exhausted we must bear
Fierce war, in endless terror of the Word.
LUCIFER. Man yet shall rest alive, he yet shall breathe,
And sinning even to death,
This new-made race of mortals
Shall cover all the earth,
And reign o'er all its creatures;
His soul shall prove eternal,
The image of his God.
Yet shall the Incarnate Word, I trust, be foil'd.
BEELZEBUB. Oh! precious tidings to angelic ears,
That heal the wounds of all our shatter'd host.
LUCIFER. Let man exist to sin, since he by sinning
Shall make the weight of sin his heritage,
Which shall be in his race
Proclaim'd original;
So that mankind existing but to sin,
And sinning still to death,
And still to error born,
In evil hour the Word
Will wear the sinner's form, if rightly deem'd
The enemy of sin.
Now rise, ye Spirits, from the dark abyss,
You who would rest assured
That man the sinner is now doom'd to death.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

MELECANO, LURCONE, LUCIFER, SATAN, *and* BEELZEBUB.

MELECANO. Command us, mighty Lord; what are thy wishes?
Would'st thou extinguish the new-risen sun?
Behold what stores I bring
Of darkness and of fire!
Alas! with fury Melecano burns.

LURCONE. Behold Lurcone, thou supreme of Hell,
Who 'gainst the highest heaven
Pants to direct his rage, whence light of limb,
Though loaded deep with wrath,
He stands with threatening aspect in thy presence.
LUCIFER. Thou, Melecan, assume the name of Pride;
Lurcone, thou of Envy; both united,
(Since power combined with power
Acquires new force) to man direct your way;
Nor him alone essay, it is my will
That woman also mourn;
Contrive that she may murmur at her God,
Because in birth not prior to the man;
Since every future man is now ordain'd
To draw his life from woman, with such thoughts
Let her wax envious, that she cannot soar
Above the man, as high as now below him.
Hence, Lurcon, be it thine to make her proud;
Let her give law to her Creator God,
Wishing o'er man priority of birth.
MELECANO. Behold, where Melecan, a dog in fierceness,
The savage dog of hell,
Darts growling to his prey!
He flies, and he returns
All cover'd and all drench'd with human gore.
LURCONE. I rapid too depart,
And on a swifter wing
Than through the cloudless air
Darts the keen eagle to his earthly prey.
Behold, I too return,
My beak with carnage fill'd, and talons full.
LUCIFER. Haste, Arfarat and Ruspican, rise all,
Rise from the centre to survey the earth!

SCENE THE FIFTH.

RUSPICAN, ARFARAT, LUCIFER, SATAN, *and* BEELZEBUB.

RUSPICAN. Soon as I heard the name of Ruspican,
With rapid pinions spread, I sought the skies,
To bend before the great Tartarian chief,
And aggravate the woes
Of this new mortal blest with air and light.

ARFARAT. Scarce had thy mighty voice
Re-echoed through the deep,
When the Tartarean fires
Flying I left for this serener sky,
Forth from my lips, and heart,
Breathing fierce rancour 'gainst the life of man.
LUCIFER. Fly, Ruspican, with all your force and fury!
Since now I call thee by the name of Anger,
Find Eve, and tell her that the fair endowment
Of her free will, deserves not she should live
In vassalage to man;
That she alone in value far exceeds
All that the sun in his bright circle warms;
That she from flesh, man from the meaner dust
Arose to life, in the fair garden she
Created pure, he in the baser field.
RUSPICAN. I joy to change the name of Ruspican
For Anger, dark and deadly:
Hence now by my tremendous aid, destructive
And deadly be this day!
Behold I go with all my force and fury;
Behold I now transfuse
My anger all into the breast of woman!
LUCIFER. Of Avarice I give,
O Arfarat, to thee the name and works;
Go, see, contend, and conquer!
Contrive that wandering Eve,
With down-cast eyes, may in the fruitful garden
Search with solicitude for hidden treasure:
Then stimulate her heart,
To wish no other Lord,
Except herself, of Eden and the world.
ARFARAT. See me already plumed
With wings of gems and gold;
See with an eye of sapphire
I gaze upon the fair;
Behold to her I speak,
With lips that emulate the ruby's lustre.
Receive now as thy own
(Thus I accost her) all the world's vast wealth!
If she reject my gift

Then will I tempt her with a shower of pearls,
A fashion yet unknown;
Thus will she melt, and thus I hope at last
In chains of gold to drag her to destruction.
LUCIFER. Rise, Guliar, Dulciato, and Maltia!
To make the band of enemies complete,
That, like a deadly hydra,
Shall dart against this man
Your seven crests portentous and terrific.

SCENE THE SIXTH.

MALTIA, DULCIATO, GULIAR, LUCIFER, SATAN, BEELZEBUB.

BEHOLD! we come with emulation fierce
To your severe command,
In prompt obedience let us rise to heaven;
Let us with wrath assail
This human enemy of abject clay.
LUCIFER. Maltia, thou shalt take the name of Sloth:
Sudden invest thyself with drowsy charms
And mischievous repose;
Now wait on Eve, in slothfulness absorb'd,
Let all this pomp of flowers,
And all these tuneful birds
Be held by her in scorn:
And from her consort flying,
Now let her feel no wishes but for death.
MALTIA. What shall I say? shall I, to others mute,
Announce to thee my sanguinary works?
Savage and silent, I
Would be loquacious in my deeds alone.
LUCIFER. Thee, Dulciato, we name Luxury;
Haste thou to Eve, and fill her with desires
To decorate her fragile form with flowers,
To bind her tresses with a golden fillet,
With various vain devices to allure
A new-found paramour;
And to her heart suggest,
That to exchange her love may prove delightful.
DULCIATO. Can Lord so mighty, from his humble slave,
Demand no higher task?
The way to purchase honour

Now will I teach all Hell,
By the completion of my glorious triumph.
Already Eve beside a chrystal fount
Exults to vanquish the vermilion rose
With cheeks of sweeter bloom,
And to exceed the lily
By her yet whiter bosom;
Now beauteous threads of gold
She thinks her tresses floating in the air;
Now amorous and charming,
Her radiant eyes she reckons suns of love,
Fit to inflame the very coldest heart.

LUCIFER. Guliar, be thou call'd Gluttony; now go,
Reveal to Eve that the forbidden fruit
Is manna all within,
And that such food in heaven
Forms the repast of angels and of God.

GULIAR. Of all the powerful foes
Leagued against man, Guliar is only he
Who can induce him to oppose his Maker;
Hence rapidly I fly
To work the woe of mortals.

SATAN. To arms, to arms! to ruin and to blood!
Yes, now to blood, infernal leeches all!
Again, again proclaiming war to Heaven,
And let us put to flight
Every audacious foe
That ventures to disturb our ancient peace.

BEELZEBUB. Now, now, great chief, with feet
That testify thy triumph,
I see thee crush the sun,
The moon, and all the stars;
For where thy radiance shines,
O Lucifer! all other beams are blind.

LUCIFER. Away. Heaven shudders at the mighty ruin
That threatens it from our infernal host:
Already I behold the moon opaque,
And light-supplying sun,
The wandering stars, and fixt,
With terror pale, and sinking in eclipse.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE THE FIRST.

CHORUS OF ANGELS SINGING.

Now let us garlands weave
Of all the fairest flowers,
Now at this early dawn,
For new-made man, and his companion dear;
Let all with festive joy,
And with melodious song,
Of the great Architect
Applaud this noblest work,
And speak the joyous sound,
Man is the wonder both of Earth and Heaven.

FIRST ANGEL.

Your warbling now suspend,
You pure angelic progeny of God,
Behold the labour emulous of Heaven!
Behold the woody scene,
Deck'd with a thousand flowers of grace divine;
Here man resides, here ought he to enjoy
In his fair mate eternity of bliss.

SECOND ANGEL.

How exquisitely sweet
This rich display of flowers,
This airy wild of fragrance,
So lovely to the eye,
And to the sense so sweet.

THIRD ANGEL.

O the sublime Creator,
How marvellous his works, and more his power!
Such is the sacred flame
Of his celestial love,
Not able to confine it in himself,
He breathed, as fruitful sparks
From his creative breast,
The Angels, Heaven, Man, Woman, and the World.

FOURTH ANGEL.

Yes, mighty Lord! yes, hallow'd love divine!
Who, ever in thyself completely blest,
Unconscious of a want,
Who from thyself alone, and at thy will,
Bright with benignant flames,
Without the aid of matter or of form,
By efficacious power
Hast of mere nothing form'd
The whole angelic host
With potency endow'd,
And that momentous gift,
Either by sin to fall,
Or by volition stand.

FIFTH ANGEL.

Hence, our Almighty Maker,
To render us more worthy of his Heaven,
And to confirm us in eternal grace,
Presented to our homage
The pure Incarnate Word;
That as a recompence for hallow'd toil
So worthily achieved,
We might adore him humble;
For there's a written law
In the records of Heaven,
That not a work of God that breathes and lives,
And is endow'd with reason,
Shall hold a seat in Heaven,
If it incline not first with holy zeal,
In tender adoration to the Word.

SIXTH ANGEL.

Justly each Spirit in the realms above,
And all of mortal race,
And every foe to Heaven,
Should bow the knee in reverence of the Word;
Since this is he whom from eternity
God in the aweful depth
Of his sublime and fruitful mind produced;
He is not accident, but substance true,

As rare as perfect, and as truly great
As his high Author holy and divine.

SEVENTH ANGEL.

This living Word, image express of God,
Is a resemblance of his mighty substance;
Whence he is called the Son, the Son of God,
Even as the Father, God;
The generated Word
By generation yields not unto time,
Since from eternity the eternal Father
Produced this Son, whence he rejoices there,
Great offspring of great Father there for ever!
For ever he is born,
There he is fed, and fostered
With plenitude of grace
Imparted by his Sire:
There was the Father ever, and the Son
Was ever at his side, or in the Father;
Nor younger is the Son
Than his Almighty Sire,
Nor elder is the Father
Than his eternal Son.

EIGHTH ANGEL.

O Son, O Sire, O God, O Man, O Word,
Let all with bended knee,
With humble adoration reverence you!

NINTH ANGEL.

O Lucifer, now doom'd to endless pain,
Had'st thou been join'd with us
In worship of the Word,
How had'st thou now been blessed in thy God!
But thou in pride alone, yes, thou alone
In thy great wisdom foolish,
Hast scorn'd the Paragon,
And wouldst not reverence the Incarnate God;
Whence by thy folly thou hast fallen as far
As thy proud soul expected to ascend.

TENTH ANGEL.

Monster of fierceness, dwell
In thy obscure recess!

And for thy weighty crime
Incessant feel and infinite thy pain,
For infinite has been thy vast offence.

ELEVENTH ANGEL.

Reside for ever in the deep abyss,
For well the world's eternal Master knows
Again to fill those high celestial seats,
That by your ruin you have vacant left;
Behold man fashion'd from the earth, who lives,
Like plants that vegetate;
See in a moment's space
How the pure breath of life,
Breathed on his visage by the power divine,
Endows the wonderous creature with a soul,
A pure immortal soul,
That graced, and lovely with exalted powers,
Shines the great faithful image of its God.
Behold it has the gift to merit highly,
The option to deserve or heaven or hell,
In free will perfect, as the first of angels.

TWELFTH ANGEL.

Yes, man alone was form'd in just derision
Of all the infernal host,
As lord of this fair world and all that lives,
The ornament of all,
The miracle of nature,
The perfect heir of heaven,
Related to the angels,
Adopted son of God,
And semblance of the Holy Trinity;
What couldst thou hope for more, what more attain,
Creature miraculous,
In whom the eternal Lord
Has now vouchsafed to signalise his power?

THIRTEENTH ANGEL.

How singular and worthy is his form,
Upright in stature, meek in dignity;
Well fashion'd are his limbs, and his complexion
Well temper'd, with a high majestic brow,

A brow turn'd upward to his native sky;
In language eloquent, in thought sublime,
For contemplation of his Maker form'd.

FOURTEENTH ANGEL.

Placed in a state of innocence is man;
Primeval justice is his blessed gift,
Hence are his senses to his reason subject,
His body to his mind,
Enjoying reason as his prime endowment.

FIFTEENTH ANGEL.

Supernal love held him too highly dear,
To let him dwell alone;
And thence of lovely woman
(Fair faithful aid) bestow'd on man the gift.
Adam, 'tis thine alone
To keep thy duty to thy Lord unstain'd;
In his command of the forbidden fruit,
Thy gift of freedom keep inviolate;
And though he fashion'd thee without thy aid,
Think not without thy aid he means to save thee!
But since, descending from the heights of heaven,
We come as kind attendants upon man,
Now let us haste to Eden's flowery banks.

ALL THE ANGELS SING.

Now take we happy flight
To Paradise, adorn'd with fairest flowers;
There let us almost worship
The mighty lord of this transcendent world,
And joyous let us sing
This flowery heaven, and Adam as its God.

SCENE THE SECOND.

ADAM. O mighty Lord of mighty things sublime!
O my supreme Creator!
O bounteous in thy love
To me thy humble servant, such rare blessings
With liberal hand thou givest,
Where'er I turn my eyes,
I see myself revered.

Approach ye animals that range the field!
And ye now close your variegated wings,
Ye pleasing birds! in me you look on Adam,
On him ordain'd to name
All things that gracious God has made for man;
And praise, with justice praise
Him who created me, who made you all,
And in his bounteous love with me rejoice.
But what do I behold? blest that I am,
My dear, my sweet companion!
Who comes to hail me with a gift of flowers,
And with these sylvan honours crown my brow.
Go! stately lion, go! and thou with scales
Impenetrable arm'd
Rhinoceros, whose pride can strike to earth
The unconquer'd elephant!
Thou fiery courser bound along the fields,
And with thy neighing shake the echoing vale;
Thou camel, and all here, or beast, or bird,
Retire, in homage to approaching Eve!

EVE. O what delight more dear,
Than that, which Adam in my sight enjoys,
Draws him far off from me? Ye tender flowers,
Where may I find on you
The traces of his step?

LURCONE. See man and woman! hide thyself and watch!

ADAM. No more fatigue my eyes,
Nor with thy animated glances dart
Such radiant lightning round:
Turn the clear Heaven of thy serener face,
To him who loves its light;
See thy beloved Adam,
Behold him, my sweet love;
O thou, who art alone
Joy of the world, and dear delight of man!

LURCONE. Dread the approach of evil!

GULIAR. Dread the deceit of hell!

EVE. By sovereign content
I feel my tongue enchain'd;
But though my voice be mute,
My countenance may seem more eloquent,

Expressing, though in silence, all my joy.
ADAM. O my companion dear!
LURCONE. And soon perchance thy foe!
ADAM. O thou my sweetest life!
GULIAR. Perchance thy bitter death!
EVE. Take, gentle Adam, from my hand these flowers;
With these, my gift, let me entwine thy locks.
ADAM. Ye lilies, and ye shrubs of snowy hue,
Jasmine as ivory pure,
Ye spotless graces of the shining field;
And thou most lovely rose
Of tint most delicate,
Fair consort of the morn,
Delighted to imbibe
The genial dew of Heaven,
Rich vegetation's vermil-tinctured gem,
April's enchanting herald,
Thou flower supremely blest,
And queen of all the flowers,
Thou form'st around my locks
A garland of such fragrance,
That up to Heaven itself
Thy balmy sweets ascend.
Let us in pure embraces
So twine ourselves, my love,
That we may seem united,
One well-compact, and intricate acanthus.
LURCONE. Soon shall the fetters of infernal toil
So spread around ye both,
The indissoluble bond,
No mortal effort shall have power to break!
EVE. Now, that with flowers so lovely
We have adorn'd our tresses,
Here let us both with humble reverence kneel,
And praise our mighty Maker.
From this my thirsting heart
No longer can refrain.
ADAM. At thy engaging words,
And thy pure heart's desire,
On these pure herbs and flowers,
I bend my willing knee in hallow'd bliss.

LURCONE. Away! far off must I
From act so meekly just
Furious depart and leave the light of day.
GULIAR. I must partake thy flight,
And follow thee, alas, surcharged with grief.
ADAM. Now that these herbs and flowers to our bent knees
Such easy rest afford,
Let us with zealous ardour raise our eyes,
Contemplating with praise our mighty Maker!
First then, devout and favour'd Eve, do thou
With sacred notes invite
To deeds so fair thy Adam.
EVE. My Lord Omnipotent,
In his celestial essence
Is first, supreme, unlimited, alone,
Eternal, uncompounded,
He no beginning had, no end will have.
ADAM. My sovereign Lord, so great,
Is irresistible, terrific, just,
Gracious, benign, indulgent,
Divine, unspotted, holy, loving, good,
In justice most revered,
Ancient of days, in his sublimest court.
EVE. He rests in highest Heaven,
Yet more exalted in his boundless self;
Thence his all-searching eye looks down on all;
Nought is from him conceal'd,
Since all exists in him:
Without him nothing could retain existence,
Nor is there aught that he
For his perfection needs,
Except himself alone.
ADAM. He every place pervades,
But is confined in none:
In him the limits of all grandeur lie,
But he exists unlimited by space.
EVE. Above the universe himself he raised,
Yet he behind it rests;
The whole he now encircles, now pervades,
Now dwells apart from all,

So great, the universe
To comprehend him fails.
ADAM. If he to all inclines,
In his just balance all he justly weighs ;
From him if all things flow,
All things in him acknowledge their support,
But he on nothing rests.
EVE. To time my great director is not subject,
For time in him sees no vicissitude :
In aweful and sublime eternity
One being stands for ever ;
For ever stands one instant,
And hence this power assumes the name of God.
ADAM. It is indeed a truth,
That my eternal mighty Lord is God ;
This deity incomprehensible
That, ere the heaven was made,
Dwelt only in himself, and heaven in him.
Eve, let us joyous rise ; in other scenes,
With admiration of celestial splendour
And of this lovely world,
With notes of hallow'd bliss
Let us again make the glad air resound.
EVE. Lead on, my faithful guide ;
Quick is my willing foot to follow thee,
Since my fond soul believes
That I in praising heaven to heaven ascend,
So my pure bosom feels
Full of divine content.
ADAM. To speak on every theme
Our mighty Maker made thee eloquent,
So that in praising heaven thou seemest there.
My fair associate! treasure of my life!
Upon the wings of this exalted praise
Devotion soars so high, that if her feet
Rest on the earth, her spirit reaches heaven.

SCENE THE THIRD.

The SERPENT, SATAN, SPIRITS.

SERPENT. To arms, to battle, O ye sons of power!
Ye warring spirits of the infernal field!

A new and wondrous war
Awaits you now, within the lists of earth;
Most strange indeed the mode
Of warring there, if triumph, war's great end,
Proves its beginning now.
Behold the sun himself turn pale with terror,
Behold the day obscured!
Behold each rapid bird directs his flight
Where thickest foliage spreads,
But shelter seeks in vain;
The leaves of every bough,
As with a palsy struck,
Affright him more, and urge his wings to flight.
I would not as a warrior take the field
Against the demi-goddess girt with angels,
Since she has now been used
To gaze on spirits tender and benign,
Not such as I, of semblance rough and fierce,
For battles born to subjugate the sky.
In human form I would not
Defy her to a great important conflict,
The world she knows contains one only man.
Nor would I of the tiger
Or the imperious lion
Or other animal assume the shape;
For well she knows they could not reason with her,
Who are of reason void.
To make her knowledge vain,
That I exist to the eternal Maker,
A source of endless fear,
Wrapt in the painted serpent's scaly folds,
Part of myself I hide, giving the rest
A human semblance and a damsel's face.
Great things I tell thee, and behold I see
My adversary prompt to parley with me.
Of novelty to hear
How eager woman is!
Now, now I loose my tongue,
And shall entangle her in many a snare.

SATAN. But what discordant sound
Rises from hell, where all was lately concord?
Why do hoarse trumpets bellow through the deep?

SCENE THE FOURTH.

VOLAN, *the* SERPENT, SPIRITS, SATAN.

VOLAN. Great Lord, ordain'd to found infernal realms,
And look with scorn upon the pomp of heaven,
Behold thy Volan fly
To pay his homage at thy scaly feet!
The chieftains of Avernus,
The prime infernal powers
To rise in rivalship
Of heaven in all, as in that lofty seat,
The Word to us reveal'd,
The source of such great strife,
They wish, that on the Earth
A goddess should prepare a throne for man,
And lead him to contemn
His own Almighty Maker:
Yet more the inhabitants of fire now wish
That having conquer'd Man,
And with such triumph gay,
To the great realms of deep and endless flames
Ye both with exultation may descend:
Then shall I see around
Hell dart its rays, and hold the sun in scorn.
But if this man resist,
Then losing every hope
Of farther victory,
They wish that on the throne
Of triumph he may as a victor sit,
Who teaches it to move,
And thou perform the office
With an afflicted partner,
With him, who labours to conduct the car;
That clothed in horrid pomp
The region of Avernus,
May speak itself the seat of endless pain,
And at the sound of inauspicious trumpets
The heavens may shake, the universe re-echo.

SCENE THE FIFTH.

VAIN GLORY *drawn by a Giant*, VOLAN, *the* SERPENT, SATAN, *and* SPIRITS.

VAIN GLORY. King of Avernus, at this harp's glad sound
I weave a starry garland for thy locks,
For well I see thy lovely scales portend
Honour to me, ruin and shame to man.
I am Vain Glory, and I sit on high,
Exulting Victress of the mighty Giant:
He has his front in heaven, on earth his feet,
A faithful image of man's mighty worth:
But shake not thou with fear! strong as he is
So brittle is the crown of glass he wears
That at my breath, which drives him fiercely on,
Man loses power, and falls a prey to Death.

SERPENT. Angel, or Goddess, from thy lofty triumph
Descend with me at the desire of Hell!
Haste to a human conflict;
You all so light and quick,
That by your movement not a leaf is shaken
In all these woods around,
Your mighty triumphs now together hide;
Now that in silence we may pass unseen,
Quick let us enter neighbouring Paradise.

VAIN GLORY. Wherefore delay? Point out the path we go;
Since prompt to follow thee,
Full as I am of haughtiness and pride,
With expeditious foot
I will advance
Among these herbs and flowers,
And let infernal laurels
Circle thy towering crest and circle mine!

SERPENT. What tribes of beauteous flowers,
And plants how new and vivid!
How desolate shall I
Soon make these verdant scenes of plant and flower!
Behold! how with my foot
I now as much depress them,
As they shoot forth with pride to rear their heads:
Behold! their humid life

I wither with my step of blasting fire.
How I enjoy, as I advance through these
Fair bowers of rapid growth,
To poison with my breath the leaf and flower,
Embittering all these sweet and blooming fruits.
We are arrived, behold the lovely tree
Prohibited by heaven,
There mount, and be embower'd
In the thick foliage of a wood so fair!

VAIN GLORY. See, I prepare to climb:
I am already high,
And in the leaves conceal'd.
Climb thou, great chief, and rapidly encircle,
And with thy scaly serpent train ascend
The tree; be quick, since now arising higher
I can discern where lonely Eve advances.

SERPENT. Behold, enraged I twine around the trunk
With these my painted and empoison'd folds;
Behold, I breathe towards this woman, love,
Though hate is in my heart:
Behold me now; more beautiful than ever,
Though now of each pestiferous cruel monster
In poison and in rage, I am the model;
Now I behold her, now
In silence I conceal my gift of speech,
Among these leaves embower'd.

SCENE THE SIXTH.

EVE, SERPENT, *and* VAIN GLORY.

EVE. I ought, the servant of a Mighty Lord,
A servant low and humble,
With reverential knee bending to earth,
I ought to praise the boundless love of him,
Since he has made me queen
Of all the sun delights to view on earth.
But if to heaven I raise my eyes and heart,
Clearly can Eve not see
She was created for these great, eternal,
Celestial miracles?
So that in spirit or in mortal frame,
She ever must enjoy or earth or heaven.

Hence this fair flowering tree
Wreathing abroad its widely branching arms,
As if desirous to contend with heaven,
Seems willing in my locks
To spread a shining heaven of verdant leaves;
And if I pass among the herbs and flowers,
Those, I behold, that by my step are press'd,
Arise more beautiful; the very buds
Expand, to form festoons
To decorate the grassy scene around.
Other new flowers with freshest beauty fair,
That stand from me sequester'd,
Form'd into groups or scatter'd in the vale,
Seem with delight to view me, and to say
The neighbouring flowers rejoice
To give thy foot support,
But we, aspiring Eagles,
From far behold thy visage,
Mild portraiture of the Almighty form.
While other plants and flowers,
Wishing that I may form my seat among them,
Above their native growth
So seem to raise themselves, that of sweet flowers
A fragrant hedge they form;
And others in a thousand tender ties,
Form on the ground so intricate a snare,
That the incautious hand which aims to free
The captive foot, must be itself ensnared.
If food I wish, or draught,
Lo! various fruit, lo! honey, milk, and manna;
Behold, from many a fount and many a rill,
The crystal beauty of the cooling stream.
If melody, behold the tuneful birds,
Behold angelic bands!
If welcome day,
Or mild and wish'd-for night,
Behold the sun, behold the moon and stars!
If I a friend require,
Adam, sweet friend, replies;
And if my God in heaven, the Eternal Maker
Dwells not unmindful, but regards my speech.

If creatures subject to my will I wish,
Lo! at my side all subject to my will.
What more can I desire, what more obtain?
Now nothing more, my Sovereign,
Eve is with honour loaded.
But what's before me? do I wake or dream?
Among these boughs I see
A human visage fair; what! are there then
More than myself and Adam,
Who view the glorious sun?
O marvellous, though I am distant far,
I yet discern the truth; with arms, with hands,
A human breast it has,
The rest is Serpent all:
O, how the sun, emblazing with his rays
These gorgeous scales with glowing colours bright,
O'erwhelms my dazzled eyes!
I would approach it.

SERPENT. Now, then, at length you see
I have precisely ta'en the semblance fit,
To overcome this woman.

EVE. The nearer I approach, more and more lovely
His semblance seems of emerald and sapphire,
Now ruby and now amethyst, and now
Of jasper, pearl, and flaming chrysolite
Each fold it waving forms around the trunk
Of this fair flowering tree!

SERPENT. I will assail my foe.
Come to survey me better,
Thou dazzler of the eye,
Enchantress of the soul,
Soft idol of the heart,
Fair nymph, approach! Lo, I display myself,
Survey me all; now satisfy thine eyes;
View me attentive, paragon of beauty,
Thou noblest ornament of all the world,
Thou lovely pomp of nature,
Thou little paradise,
To whom all things do homage!
Where lonely from thy friend, thy Adam, far
Where art thou? now advancing where

The numerous bands of Angels
Become such fond admirers of thy beauty?
Happy I deem myself, supremely happy,
Since 'tis my blessed lot,
With two fond eyes alone to gaze on that,
Which with unnumber'd eyes, heaven scarce surveys.
Trust me if all the loveliness of heaven
Would wrap itself within a human veil,
Nought but thy beauteous bosom
Could form a mansion worthy such a guest.
How well I see, full well
That she above with thy light agile feet,
Imprints her step in heaven, and there she smiles
With thy enchanting lip,
To scatter joy around those blessed spheres;
Yes, with thy lips above,
She breathes, she speaks, she pauses,
And with thine eyes communicates a lustre
To all that's fair in heaven or fair on earth.

EVE. And who art thou, so eager
To lavish praise on me?
Yet never did mine eyes see form like thine.

SERPENT. Can I be silent now?
Too much, too much, I pant
To please the lovely model of all grace.
Know when the world was fashion'd out of nought,
And this most fruitful garden,
I was ordain'd to dwell a gardener here,
By him who cultivates
The fair celestial fields;
Here joyful I ascend,
To watch that no voracious bird may seize
On such delicious fruit;
Here it is my delight,
Though all be marvellously fair around,
Lily to blend with lily, rose with rose,
And now the fragrant hedge
To form, and now between the groups of flowers,
And o'er the tender herb
To guide the current of the chrystal stream.
Oh what sweet scenes to captivate the eye

Of such a lovely virgin,
Will I disclose around;
Thou, if thou canst return
To this alluring spot,
And ever with fresh myrtle and new flowers,
More beauteous thou shalt find it;
This wondrous faculty I boast infused
By thy supernal Maker,
To guard in plant and flower their life and fragrance.

EVE. Since I have found thee courteous
No less than wise, reveal to me thy name;
Speak it to me, unless
I seek to know too much.

SERPENT. Wisdom, I name myself,
Sometimes I Life am call'd,
For this my double nature, since I am
One part a serpent and the other human.

EVE. Strange things this day I hear; but tell me why
Thou serpent art combined with human form?

SERPENT. I will inform thee; when the sovereign God
On nothing resting, yet gave force to all,
To balance all things in an even scale
The sage of heaven desired,
And not from opposite extremities
To pass without a medium justly founded:
Hence 'tween the brute and man
It pleased him to create this serpent kind;
And even this participates in reason,
And with a human face has human speech.
But what can fail to honour with submission,
The demi-god of earth?
Oh! if proportion'd to thy charms, or equal
To the desert of man,
You had high knowledge, doubt not but in all
Ye would be reckon'd as immortal gods;
Since the prime power of lofty science is
One of the first and greatest
Of attributes divine; Oh, could this be,
Descending from the base
Of this engaging plant,
How as a goddess should I here adore thee!

EVE. What, dost thou think so little then the sum
Of knowledge given to man? does he not know
Of every living herb and flower and plant,
Of minerals and of unnumber'd gems,
Of fish, of fowl, and every animal,
In water or on earth, of fire, of air,
Of this fair starry heaven,
And of the moon and sun,
The virtues most concealed?

SERPENT. Ah, this is nothing; since it only serves
To make the common things of nature known;
And I, although I am
Greatly inferior in my rank to man,
Yet, one by one, even I can number these.
More worthy it would be
To know both good and ill;
This, this is the supreme
Intelligence, and mysteries most high,
That on the earth would make you like to God.

EVE. That which hath power sufficient to impart
This knowledge so sublime of good and ill,
(But mixt with mortal anguish,)
Is this forbidden tree, on which thou sittest.

SERPENT. And tell me why a law
So bitter rises from a fruit so sweet?
Where then, where is the sense
That you so lately boasted as sublime?
Observe, if it be just,
That man so brave, so lovely, man that rules
The world with skilful hand, man that so much
Pleased his creating God, when power almighty
Fashion'd the wonders both of earth and heaven,
That man at last a little fruit should crush,
And all be form'd for nothing, or at best
But for a moment's space?
No, no, far from thee, far be such a doubt!
Let colour to thy cheek, and to thy lip
The banish'd rose return!
Say,—but I know—thy heart
Within thee speaks the language that I speak!

EVE. The Lord commanded me I should not taste

This fruit; and to obey him is my joy.
SERPENT. If 'tis forbidden thee
To taste a fruit so fair,
Heaven does not choose that man should be a God.
But thou with courtesy, to my kind voice
Lend an attentive ear: say, if your Maker
Required such strict obedience, that you might
Depend but on his word to move and guard you;
Was there not power sufficient in the laws
Sublime of hope, of faith, and charity?
Why then, fair creature, why, without occasion
Thus should he multiply his laws for man,
For ever outraging with such a yoke
Your precious liberty, and of great lords
Making you slaves, nay, in one point inferior
Even to the savage beasts,
Whom he would not reduce to any law?
Who does not know that loading you so much
With precepts, he has lessen'd the great blessing
Of joyous being, that your God first gave you?
Perchance he dreaded that ye soon might grow
His equals both, in knowledge, and be Gods?
No, for though like to God you might become
By such experiment, the difference still
Between you must be great, since this your knowledge,
And acquisition of divinity,
Could be but imitation, and effect
Of the first cause divine that dwells above.
And can it then be true,
That such a vital hand
Can do a deadly deed?
Oh hadst thou tasted this, how wouldst thou gain
Advantage of the Lord, how then with him
Would thy conversing tongue,
Accuse the latent mysteries of heaven!
Far other flowers and other plants, and fields,
And elements, and spheres,
Far different suns, and different moons, and stars
There are above, from those thou viewest here
Buried below these; all to thee are near,
Observe how near! but at the very distance

This apple is from thee. Extend thy hand,
Boldly extend it,—ah! why dost thou pause?
EVE. What should I do? Who counsels me, O God?
Hope bids me live, and fear at once destroys me.
But say, how art thou able
To know such glorious things exist above,
And that on earth, one thus may equal God,
By feeding on this apple,
If thou in heaven wert never,
And ne'er permitted of the fruit to taste?
SERPENT. Ah! is there ought I can deny to her
Whose happiness I wish? Now listen to me.
When of this garden I was made the keeper,
By him who fashion'd thee,
All he has said to thee, to me he said;
And opening to me heaven's eternal bosom,
With all his infinite celestial pomp,
He satiated my eyes, and then thus spake:
Thy paradise thou hast enjoy'd, O Serpent,
No more thou shalt behold it; now retain
Memory of heaven on earth,
Which thou may'st do by feeding on such fruit.
A heavenly seat alone is fit for man,
For that's the seat of beauty;
Since thou art partly man, and partly brute,
'Tis just thou dwell on earth;
The world was made for various beasts to dwell in,
He added, nor canst thou esteem it hard,
Serpent and man, to dwell on earth for ever,
Since thou already in thy human portion
Most fully hast enjoy'd thy bliss above.
Thus I eternal live,
Forming my banquet of this savoury fruit,
And Paradise is open to my eyes,
By the intelligence, through me transfused
From this delicious viand.
EVE. Alas! what should I do? to whom apply?
My heart, what is thy counsel?
SERPENT. 'Tis true, thy sovereign has imposed upon thee,
Under the pain of death,
To taste not of this fruit;

And to secure from thee
A dainty so delightful,
The watchful guard he made me
Of this forbidden tree;
So that if I consent, both man and thou,
His beautiful companion,
May rise to equal God in happiness.
'Tis but too true that to participate
In food and beverage with savage beasts,
Gives us in this similitude to them;
It is not just you both,
Works of a mighty Maker,
Great offspring of great God,
Should in a base condition,
Among these groves and woods,
Lead a life equal to the lowest beast.

EVE. Ah! why art thou so eager
That I should taste of this forbidden food?

SERPENT. Wouldst thou that I should tell?

EVE. 'Tis all my wish.

SERPENT. Now lend thine ear, now arch
With silent wonder, both thy beauteous brows!
For two proud joys of mine,
Not for thy good alone, I wish to make thee
This liberal overture, and swear to keep
Silence while thou shalt seize the fruit denied.
First to avenge that high unworthy wrong
Done me by God, in fashioning my shape;
For I was deem'd the refuse of his heaven,
For these my scaly parts,
That ever like a snake I trail behind;
And then, because he should to me alone
Have given this world, and o'er the numerous beasts
Have made me lord, not wholly of their kind;
But this my empire mighty and supreme,
O'er all these living things,
While man is doom'd
To breathe on vital air,
Must seem but low and servile vassalage;
Since man, and only man
Was chosen high and mighty lord of all

This wondrous scene, and he thus raised to grandeur
Was newly form'd of nought.
But when the fairest of all Eden's fruits
Is snatch'd and tasted, when you rise to Gods,
'Tis just that both ascending from this world,
Should reach the higher spheres;
So that on earth to make me
Of every creature lord,
Of human error I my virtue make:
Know, that command is grateful even to God,
Grateful to man, and grateful to the serpent.

EVE. I yield obedience, ah! what is't I do?

SERPENT. Rather what do you not? Ah, boldly taste,
Make me a god on earth, thyself in heaven.

EVE. Alas, how I perceive
A chilling tremour wander through my bones,
That turns my heart to ice!

SERPENT. It is thy mortal part that now begins
To languish, as o'ercome by the divine,
Which o'er its lowly partner
In excellence ascends.
Behold the pleasant plant,
More lovely and more rich
Than if it raised to heaven branches of gold,
And bore the beauteous emerald as leaves,
With roots of coral and a trunk of silver.
Behold this jewel'd fruit,
That gives enjoyment of a state divine!
How fair it is, and how
It takes new colours from the solar rays,
Bright as the splendid train
Of the gay peacock, when he whirls it round
Full in the sun, and lights his thousand eyes!
Behold how it invites!
'Tis all delicious, it is sweetness all;
Its charms are not deceitful,
Thine eye can view them well.
Now take it! Now I watch
If any angel spy thee! Dost thou pause?
Up! for once more I am thy guide; at last
The victory is thine!

EVE. At length behold me the exalted mistress
Of this most lovely fruit!
But why, alas, does my cold brow distil
These drops that overwhelm me?
SERPENT. Lovely Virgin,
Will not our reason tell us
Supreme felicity is bought with pain?
Who from my brow will wipe
These drops of keener pain?
Who dissipate the dread that loads my heart?
EVE. Tell me what wouldst thou? tell me who afflicts thee?
SERPENT. The terror of thy Lord; and hence I pray thee?
That when thou hast enjoy'd
That sweet forbidden fruit,
When both of you become eternal gods,
That you would guard me from the wrath of heaven;
Since well indeed may he,
Whom we call God, kindle his wrath against me
Having to you imparted
Taste of this fruit against his high command.
But tell him, my desire
To make me lord of this inferior world,
Like man a god in heaven,
Render'd me mute while Eve attain'd the apple.
EVE. The gift I owe thee, Serpent, well deserves
That I should ne'er forget thee.
SERPENT. Now in these verdant leaves I hide myself
Till thou with sounds of joy
Shalt call and re-assure me.
EVE. Now then conceal thyself, I promise thee
To be thy shield against the wrath of God.
O what delicious odour! 'tis so sweet
That I can well believe
That all the lovely flowers
From this derive their fragrance.
These dewy leaves to my conception seem
Moistened with manna, rather than with dew.
Ah, it was surely right
That fruit so exquisite
Should flourish to impart new life to man,
Not waste its sweets upon the wind and sun.

Nothing for any ill
To man could spring from God's creative hand :
Since he for man assuredly has felt
Such warmth of love unbounded, I will taste it.
How sweet it is ! how far
Surpassing all the fruits of every kind,
Assembled in this soil !
But where is Adam now ? O, Adam ! Adam !
He answers not ; then thou with speed depart
To find him ; but among these flowers and leaves
Conceal this lovely apple, lest the angels,
Descrying it, forbid
Adam to taste its sweets,
And so from man be made a mighty God.

SERPENT. Extinguish in the waves thy rays, O sun !
No more distribute life !
Thus Lucifer ordains, and thus the apple !
Man, man is now subdued !

VAIN GLORY. O joyous day ! O day
To Hell of triumph, and of shame to Heaven !
Eve has enjoy'd the apple,
And now contrives that man may taste it too.
Now see by direst fate
Life is exchanged for death !
Now I exulting sing,
And hence depart with pride,
Since man's high boast is crush'd,
And his bright day now turned to hideous night !

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE THE FIRST.

ADAM *and* EVE.

OH, my beloved companion !
Oh thou of my existence,
The very heart and soul !
Hast thou, with such excess of tender haste,
With ceaseless pilgrimage,
To find again thy Adam,
Thus solitary wandered ?

Behold him! Speak! what are thy gentle orders?
Why dost thou pause? what ask of God? what dost thou?
EVE. Adam, my best beloved!
My guardian and my guide!
Thou source of all my comfort, all my joy!
Thee, thee alone I wish,
And in these pleasing shades
Thee only have I sought.
ADAM. Since thou hast call'd thy Adam,
(Most beautiful companion,)
The source and happy fountain of thy joy;
Eve, if to walk with me
It now may please thee, I will show thee love,
A sight thou hast not seen;
A sight so lovely, that in wonder thou
Wilt arch thy graceful brow.
Look thou, my gentle bride, towards that path,
Of this so intricate and verdant grove,
Where sit the birds embowered;
Just there, where now, with soft and snowy plumes,
Two social doves have spread their wings for flight,
Just there, thou shalt behold, (oh pleasing wonder,)
Springing amid the flowers,
A living stream, that with a winding course
Flies rapidly away;
And as it flies, allures
And tempts you to exclaim, sweet river, stay!
Hence eager in pursuit
You follow, and the stream, as if it had
Desire to sport with you,
Through many a florid, many a grassy way,
Well known to him, in soft concealment flies:
But when at length he hears,
You are afflicted to have lost his sight,
He rears his watery locks, and seems to say,
Gay with a gurgling smile,
"Follow! ah follow still my placid course!
If thou art pleased with me, with thee I sport."
And thus with sweet deceit he leads you on
To the extremest bound
Of a fair flowery meadow; then at once

With quick impediment,
Says, "Stop! Adieu! for now, yes, now I leave you:"
Then down a rock descends:
There, as no human foot can follow further,
The eye alone must follow him, and there,
In little space you see a mass of water
Collected in a deep and fruitful vale,
With laurel crown'd and olive,
With cypress, oranges and lofty pines.
The limpid water in the sun's bright ray
A perfect chrystal seems;
Hence in its deep recess,
In the translucent wave,
You see a precious glittering sand of gold,
And bright as moving silver
Innumerable fish;
Here with melodious notes
The snowy swans upon the shining streams
Form their sweet residence;
And seem in warbling to the wind to say,
"Here let those rest who wish for perfect joy."
So that, my dear companion,
To walk with me will please thee.

EVE. So well thy language to my sight has brought
What thou desirest to show me,
I see thy flying river as it sports,
And hear it as it murmurs.
And beauteous also is this scene, where now
Pleased we sojourn, and here, perhaps, even here
The lily whitens with the purest lustre,
And the rose reddens with the richest hue.
Here also bathed in dew
Plants of minutest growth
Are painted all with flowers.
Here trees of amplest leaf
Extend their rival shades,
And stately rise to heaven.

ADAM. Now by these cooling shades,
The beauty of these plants,
By these delightful meadows,
These variegated flowers,

By the soft music of the rills and birds,
Let us sit down in joy!
  EVE. Behold then I am seated!
How I rejoice in viewing not alone
These flowers, these herbs, these high and graceful plants.
But Adam, thou, my lover,
Thou, thou art he, by whom the meadows seem
More beautiful to me,
The fruit more blooming, and the streams more clear.
  ADAM. The decorated fields
With all their flowery tribute cannot equal
Those lovelier flowers, that with delight I view
In the fair garden of your beauteous face.
Be pacified, you flowers,
My words are not untrue;
You shine besprinkled with ethereal dew,
You give the humble earth to glow with joy
At one bright sparkle of the blazing sun;
But with the falling sun ye also fall:
But these more living flowers
Of my dear beauteous Eve
Seem freshen'd every hour
By soft devotion's dew,
That she with pleasure sheds
Praising her mighty Maker:
And by the rays of two terrestrial suns
In that pure heaven, her face,
They rise, and not to fall,
Decking the Paradise
Of an enchanting visage.
  EVE. Dear Adam, do not seek
With tuneful eloquence
To sooth my ear by speaking of thy love!
The heart is confident,
That fondly flames with pure and hallow'd ardour.
In sweet exchange accept, my gentle love,
This vermeil-tinctured gift, you know it well;
This is the fruit forbidden,
This is the blessed apple.
  ADAM. Alas! what see I! ah! what hast thou done,
Invader of the fruit,

Forbidden by thy God?
EVE. It would be long to tell thee
The reason that induced me
To make this fruit my prey: let it suffice,
I gain'd thee wings to raise thy flight to Heaven.
ADAM. Ne'er be it true, ah never
That to obtain thy favour,
I prove to Heaven rebellious and ungrateful,
And to obey a woman,
So disobey my Maker and my God!
Then did not death denounced
With terror's icy paleness blanch thy cheek?
EVE. And think'st thou, if the apple
Were but the food of death,
The great producer would have raised it there,
Where being is eternal?
Thinkst thou, that if of error
This fruit-tree were the cause,
In man's delighted eye
So fertile and so fair,
He would have form'd it flourishing in air!
Ah, were it so, he would indeed have given
A cause of high offence,
Since nature has ordain'd,
(A monitress sagacious,)
That to support his being, man must eat,
And trust in what looks fair, as just and good.
ADAM. If the celestial tiller,
Who the fair face of Heaven
Has thickly sown with stars,
Amidst so many plants fruitful and fair,
Placed the forbidden apple,
The fairest and most sweet,
'Twas to make proof of man,
As a wise keeper of his heavenly law,
And to afford him scope for high desert;
For he alone may gain the name of brave,
Who rules himself and all his own desires.
Man might indeed find some excuse for sin,
If scantily with fruits
This garden were supplied;

But this abounding in so many sweets,
Man ought not to renounce
The clear command of Heaven.
  EVE. And is it thus you love me?
Ne'er be it true, ah never,
That I address you as my heart, my life!
From you I'll only wander,
Bathed in my tears, and sighing,
And hating even myself,
I'll hide me from the sun.
  ADAM. Dear Eve! my sweetest love!
My spirit and my heart!
Oh haste to dry thine eyes!
For mine are all these tears
That bathe thy cheek, and stream upon thy bosom.
  EVE. Ah, my unhappy state!
I that so much have said, so much have done
To elevate this man
Above the highest Heaven, and now so little
Can he or trust or love me!
  ADAM. Ah, do not grieve, my life!
Too much it wounds my soul
To see thee in affliction.
  EVE. I know your sole desire
Is to be witness to my sighs and tears;
Hence to the winds and seas
I pay this bitter tribute.
  ADAM. Alas! my heart is splitting.
What can I do? When I look up to heaven,
I feel an icy tremor
Even to my bones oppress me,
Anxious alone to guard the Heavenly precept:
If I survey my partner,
I share her tears and echo back her sighs.
'Tis torture and distraction
To wound her with refusal: my kind heart
Would teach my opening hand to seize the apple,
But in my doubtful breast
My spirit bids it close.
Adam! thou wretch! how many
Various desires besiege thy trembling heart!

One prompts thee now to sigh,
Another to rejoice; nor canst thou know
Which shall incline thee most,
Or sighs, or joyous favour,
From woman, or from God.
EVE. Yet he reflects, and wishes
That Eve should now forsake
Her hope of being happy
In elevating man,
Even while I hold the fruit of exaltation!
ADAM. Though mute, yet eloquent
Are all your looks, my love;
Alas! whate'er you ask
You're certain to obtain;
And my heart grants, before your tongue can speak.
Eyes, that to me are suns,
The Heaven of that sweet face
No more, no more obscure!
Return! alas! return
To scatter radiance o'er that cloudy cheek!
Lift up, O lift thy brow
From that soft mass of gold that curls around it,
Locks like the solar rays,
Chains to my heart and lightning to my eyes!
O let thy lovely tresses,
Now light and unconfined,
Sport in the air and all thy face disclose,
That paradise, that speaks a heart divine!
I yield thee full obedience;
Thy prayers are all commands:
Dry, dry thy streaming eyes, and on thy lips
Let tender smiles like harmless lightning play!
EVE. Ah, misbelieving Adam,
Be now a kind receiver
Of this delightful fruit!
Hasten, now hasten to extend thy hand
To press this banquet of beatitude!
ADAM. Oh, my most sweet companion,
Behold thy ardent lover!
Now banish from his heart
The whirlpool of affliction, turn'd to him

His dearest guide, his radiant polar star!
Show me that lovely apple,
Which 'midst thy flowers and fruits,
Ingenious plunderer, thou hidest from me!
EVE. Adam, behold the apple!
What say'st thou? I have tasted, and yet live.
Ah, 'twill insure our lives,
And make us equal to our God in Heaven.
But first the fruit entire
We must between us eat,
And when we have enjoy'd it,
Then to a radiant throne, a throne of stars,
Exalting Angels will direct our flight.
ADAM. Give me the pilfer'd fruit,
Thou courteous pilferer!
Give me the fruit that charms thee,
And let me yield to her,
Who to make me a God has toil'd and wept!
Alas! what have I done?
How sharp a thorn is piercing to my heart
With instantaneous anguish!
How am I o'erwhelm'd
In a vast flood of sorrow!
EVE. Alas! what do I see?
Oh bitter knowledge! unexpected sight!
All is prepared for human misery.
ADAM. O precious liberty! where art thou fled?
EVE. O precious liberty! O dire enthralment!
ADAM. Is this the fruit so sweet,
The source of so much bitter?
Say why wouldst thou betray me?
Ah why of heaven deprive me!
Why make me forfeit thus
My state of innocence,
Where cheerful I enjoy a blissful life?
Why make me thus a slave
To the fierce arms of death,
Thou, whom I deem'd my life?
EVE. I have been blind to good,
Quick-sighted but to evil,
An enemy to Adam,

A rebel to my God,
For daring to exalt me
To the high gates of heaven,
I fall presumptuous to the depths of hell.
ADAM. Alas, what dart divine appears in heaven,
Blazing with circling flame?
EVE. What punishment,
Wretch that I am, hangs o'er me? Am I naked!
And speaking still to Adam?
ADAM. Am I too naked? hide me! hence!
EVE. I fly.

SCENE THE SECOND.

VOLANO. Thou'rt fallen, at length thou'rt fallen, O thou presuming
With new support from the resplendent stars,
To mount to seats sublime!
Adam, at length thou'rt fallen to the deep,
As far as thy ambition hoped to soar;
Now see thou hast attain'd
To learn the distance between heaven and hell.
Now let Avernus echo,
To the hoarse sound of the funereal trumpet!
Joyful arise to light,
And pay your homage to the prince of hell!

SCENE THE THIRD.

SATAN, VOLANO, *Chorus of* SPIRITS, *with their flags flying, and infernal instruments.*

VOLANO. Man is subdued, subdued!
Palms of eternal glory!
Why pause ye now? to your infernal reeds
And pipes of hoarsest sound, with pitch cemented,
And various instruments of discord,
Now let the hand and lip be quick applied!
Behold how triumph now to us returns,
As rightly he foretold
Our Stygian Emperor! Spread to the wind
Your fluttering banners! Oh thou festive day,
To Hell of glory, and to Heaven of shame!

SCENE THE FOURTH.

SERPENT, VAIN GLORY, SATAN, VOLANO, *and* SPIRITS.

SERPENT. To pleasures and to joys,
Ye formidable dark sulphureous warriors!
Let Fame to heaven now on her raven plumes
Direct her rapid flight,
Of Man's completed crime
The mournful messenger.

SATAN. Behold, again expanded in the air
The insignia of hell!
Hear now the sounds of triumph,
And voices without number
That raise to heaven the shout of victory!

SERPENT. Lo, I return, ye Spirits of Avernus,
And as I promised, a proud conqueror!
Lo, to these deep infernal realms of darkness
I bring transcendent light, transcendent joy;
Thanks to my fortitude, which from that giant
Now wretched, and in tears,
Forced his aspiring crown of fragile glass;
And thanks to her, this martial heroine,
Vain Glory, whom to my proud heart I press.

SATAN. The torrent hastes not to the sea so rapid,
Nor yet so rapid in the realm of fire
Flashes kindle and die,
As the quick circling hours
Of good are join'd to evil
In life's corrupted state;
The work of my great Lord, nor less the work
Of thee, great Goddess of the scene condemn'd;
Up, up with homage quick
To show ourselves of both the blest adorers!

SERPENT. Now, from their bended knees let all arise,
And to increase our joys
Let thy glad song, Canoro,
Now memorize the prosperous toil of hell.

CANORO. Happy Canoro, raised to matchless bliss,
Since 'tis thy lot to speak
The prosperous exploits of Lucifer!
Behold I bend the knee,

And sing thy triumph in a joyous strain ;
Behold, the glorious triumph
Of that unconquer'd power,
Who every power surpasses,
The mighty monarch of the deadly realm !
Now raise the tumid form,
Avernus, banish grief ;
Man is involved in snares,
And Death is glutted with his frail existence.
This is the potent, brave,
And ancient enemy
Of man, the dauntless foe,
And dread destroyer of the starry court.
No more contentment dwell
In the terrestrial seat :
Thou moon, and sun, be darken'd,
And every element to chaos turn !
Man is at length subdued.
From a corrupted source,
A weak and hapless offspring,
Thanks to the fruit, his progeny shall prove.
To that exalted seat
By destiny our due,
Can Death's vile prey ascend,
Who now lies prostrate at the feet of Hell ?

SERPENT. Silence, no more ! Now in superior joys
Ye quick and fluttering spirits,
Now, now, your wings expand,
And active in your pleasure,
Weave a delightful dance !

SCENE THE FIFTH.

A Chorus of SPRIGHTS *in the shape of* ANTICS, SERPENT, SATAN, VOLAN, CANORO, VAIN GLORY, *and* SPIRITS.

To thee behold us flying,
Round thee behold us sporting,
O monarch of Avernus !
To recreate thy heart in joyous dance.
Come, let us dance, happy and light,
Ye little Sprights ;
Man was of flesh, now all of dust,

Such is the will of hideous Death;
A blessed lot
No more is his, wretched in all.
Now let us weave, joyous and dancing,
Ties as many,
As now Hell's prosperous chieftain
Spreads around man, who weeps and wails,
And now lifeless,
Is almost render'd by his anguish.
Enjoy, enjoy in fragile vesture,
Man, O heaven;
Stygian Serpent has o'erwhelm'd him,
Wherefore let each dance in triumph,
Full of glory,
Since our king has proved victorious.
But, what think'st thou Heaven in sorrow?
On the sudden,
He will spring to scenes celestial;
And he there will wreak his vengeance
On the Godhead,
That is now in heaven so troubled.

SERPENT. Ah, what lofty sounding trumpets
Through the extensive fields of heaven rebellow?

VAIN GLORY. Ah, from my triumph now I fall to hell,
Through subterraneous scenes exhaling fire,
With all my fatal pomp at once I sink!

SERPENT. And I, alas, am plunging
With thee to deepest horror!

SATAN. Avoid, avoid, companions,
This unexpected lustre,
That brings, alas, to us a night of horror!

VOLANO. Alas, why should we tarry?
Fly all, O fly with speed
This inimical splendour,
These dread and deadly accents,
The utterance of God!

SCENE THE SIXTH.

GOD THE FATHER, ANGELS, ADAM, *and* EVE.

GOD THE FATHER.

AND is it thus you keep the law of heaven,
Adam and Eve? O ye too faithless found,
Ye children of a truly tender father!
Thou most unhappy, how much hast thou lost,
And in a moment, Adam!
Fool, to regard the Serpent more than God.
Ah, could repentance e'er belong to Him
Who cannot err, then might I well repent me
Of having made this man.
Now, Adam, thou hast tasted
The apple, thou hast sinn'd,
Thou hast corrupted God's exalted bounty:
The elements, the heavens,
The stars, the moon, the sun, and whatsoever
Has been for man created,
Now seems by man abhorr'd, and as unworthy
Now to retain existence,
To his destruction he solicits death.
But since 'tis just that I, who had proportion'd
Reward to merit, should now make chastisement
Keep pace with guilt, contemplating myself,
I view Astrea, in whose righteous stroke
Lo, I myself descend, for I am justice.
Why pausest thou, O sinner, in his presence,
Who on a starry throne,
As an offended judge prepares thy sentence?
Appear! to whom do I address me? Adam,
Adam, where art thou? say! dost thou not hear?

ADAM. Great Sovereign of heaven! if to those accents,
Of which one single one form'd earth and heaven,
My God, if to that voice,
That call'd on Adam, a deaf asp I seem'd,
It was terror struck me dumb:
Since to my great confusion,
I was constrain'd, naked, to come before thee.

GOD THE FATHER.

And who with nakedness has made acquainted
Him, who although he was created naked,
With innocence was clothed?

ADAM. Of knowledge the dread fruit that I have tasted;
The fault of my companion!

EVE. Too true it is, that the malignant serpent,
Made me so lightly think of thy injunction,
That the supreme forbiddance
Little or nought I valued.

GOD THE FATHER.

Adam, thou sinner! O thou bud corrupted
By the vile worm of error!
Though eager to ascend celestial seats,
An angel in thy pride, thy feeble wings
Left thee to fall into the depths of hell.
By thy disdain of life,
Death is thy acquisition;
Unworthy now of favour,
I strip thee of thy honours;
And soon thou shalt behold the herbs and flowers
Turn'd into thorns and thistles,
The earth itself this day by me accurst.
Then shalt thou utter sighs in want of food,
And from thy alter'd brow thou shalt distil
Streams of laborious sweat,
A supplicant for bread;
Nor ever shall the strife of man have end,
Till, as he rose from dust, to dust he turn.
And thou, first author of the first offence,
With pain thou shalt produce the human birth,
As thou hast taught, with anguish infinite,
The world this fatal day to bring forth sin.
Thee, cruel Serpent, I pronounce accursed;
Be it henceforth thy destiny to creep
Prone on the ground, and on the dust to feed.
Eternal strife between thee and the woman,
Strife barbarous and deadly,
This day do I denounce:
If one has fallen, the other, yet victorious,

Shall live to bruise thy formidable head.
Now, midst the starry spheres,
Myself I will seclude from human sight.

SCENE THE SEVENTH.

An ANGEL, ADAM, *and* EVE.

ANGEL. Ah Eve, what hast thou lost,
Of thy dread Sovereign slighting the commands!
Thou Adam, thou hast sinn'd;
And Eve too sinning with thee,
Ye have together, of the highest heaven
Shut fast the gates, and open'd those of hell!
In seeking sweeter life,
Ye prove a bitter death;
And for a short delight
A thousand tedious sufferings.
How much it had been better for this man
To say, I have offended, pardon, Lord!
Than to accuse his partner, she the serpent:
Hence let these skins of beasts, thrown over both,
Become your humble clothing;
And hence let each be taught
That God approves the humble,
And God in anger punishes the proud.
ADAM. O man! O dust! O my frail destiny!
O my offence! O death!
EVE. O woman! O of evil
Sole gluttonous producer!
O fruit! my sin! O serpent! O deceit!
ANGEL. Now let these skins that you support upon you,
Tell you the grievous troubles
That you have to sustain;
Rude vestments are these skins,
From whence you may perceive
That much of misery must be endured
Now in the field of life,
Till death shall reap ye both.
Now, now lament and weep,
From him solicit mercy,
For still your mighty Maker may be found

Gracious in heaven, indulgent to the world,
Most merciful to man,
If equal to the pride
That made him err, his penitence will weep.
ADAM. Ah whither art thou fled?
Where lonely dost thou leave me?
O too disgusting apple,
If thou canst render man to angels hateful.
Alas, my dread destruction
Springs from a source so high,
That it will find no end.
Most miserable Adam! if thou fallest,
Ah, who will raise thee up?
If those eternal hands
That should uphold the heaven, the world, and man,
Closed for thy good, are open for thy ill,
How much should'st thou express! but tears and grief
Fetter the tongue and overwhelm the heart!
O sin! O agony!
EVE. Adam, my Adam, I will call thee mine,
Although I may have lost thee!
Unhappy Eve acknowledges her error,
She weeps, and she laments it.
She sees thee in great anguish:
O could her tears wash out the grievous stain
Thou hast upon thy visage!
Adam! alas thou answerest not, and I
Suffer in seeing thee so pale and pensive,
Thy hands united in the folds of pain!
But if through deed of mine thou hast occasion
For endless shame and silence,
Wilt thou reply to me? do I deserve it?
I merit only woe by being woman;
Eve has invented weeping,
Eve has discover'd anguish,
Labour and lassitude,
Distraction and affright;
Eve, Eve has minister'd to death and hell!
ADAM. Enjoy, enjoy, O woman,
My anguish, my perdition, and my death;
Banish me hence for loving thee too well!

Ah, if thou wert desirous of my tears,
Now, now extend thy hands, receive these streams
That I must pour abundant from mine eyes ;
If thou didst wish my sighs, lo sighs I give thee ;
If anguish, view it ; if my blood, 'tis thine ;
Rather my death, it will be easy to thee
Now to procure my death,
If thou hast render'd me of life unworthy.

SCENE THE EIGHTH.

The Archangel Michael, Adam, *and* Eve.

Michael. Why this delay? come on, be quick, depart,
Corrupted branches, from this fair and beauteous
Terrestrial paradise! Are ye so bold,
Ye putrid worms? come on, be quick, depart,
Since with a scourge of fire I thus command you.
Adam. Alas! I am destroy'd
By the fierce blow of this severe avenger!
Eve. Now sunk in vital power
I feel my sad existence,
E'en at the menace from this scourge of fire.
Michael. These stony plains now must thy naked foot
Press, in the stead of sweet and beauteous flowers,
Since thy erroneous folly
Forbids thy dwelling in this pleasant garden.
Behold in me the punisher of those
Who against their God rebel, and hence I bear
These radiant arms that with tremendous power
Make me invincible. I was the spirit
Who, in the mighty conflict,
Advancing to the north,
Struck down great Lucifer, the haughty leader
Of wicked angels, so that into hell
They plunged precipitate and all subdued ;
And thus it has seem'd good to my tremendous
Celestial chief, that I shall also drive
Man, rebel to his God, with this my sword
Of ever-blazing fire,
Drive him for ever from this seat of bliss.
You angels all depart, and now with me

Expand your plumes for heaven;
As it has been your lot,
Like mine, on earth here to rejoice with man,
Man once a demi-god and now but dust,
Here soon with falchions arm'd,
Falchions that blaze with fire,
As guardians of these once delightful gates
The brave and active Cherubim shall aid you.

SCENE THE NINTH.

Chorus of ANGELS *that sing*, ARCHANGEL, ADAM, *and* EVE.

ADIEU, remain in peace!
O thou that livest in war!
Alas, how much it grieves us,
Great sinner, to behold thee now but dust.
Weep! weep! indulge thy sighs,
And view thy lost possession now behind thee;
Weep! weep! for all thy sorrow
Thou yet may'st see exchanged for songs of joy:
This promise to the sinner Heaven affords
Who contrite turns to Heaven with holy zeal.

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE THE FIRST.

VOLAN, *Chorus of* FIERY, AIRY, EARTHLY, *and* AQUATIC SPIRITS.

VOLAN. Forth from a thousand clouds of flame and smoke,
From the deep bosom of the spacious earth,
I to these scenes a messenger return.
Now to the fatal sound
Of these entwisted pipes,
By hissing snakes united,
And all attuned to the fierce notes of death,
Now cease, now cease ye all,
Ye potent spirits, to reside in fire,
Or in the air, in water, or in earth,
Appear! why pause ye? such is the command
Of your brave emperor, the chief of hell.

Hark! hear ye not the sound
That calls you forth from out your various dwellings?
Behold! how from the sphere of blazing fire
Arsiccio, of the blazing legion prince,
Comes to pay homage to his mighty lord.

ARION. Lo, from the field of air I too descend,
I who am called Arion,
The mighty ruler of this winged band,
At the command of hell.

TARPALCE. Of the infernal palace
To bend before the prince,
Forth from a thousand subterraneous paths
The great Tarpalce, chief of earthly sprights,
Raises his brow to heaven.

ONDOSO. From many a vein of water,
From many a rising fount,
From rills, and rivers, torrents, floods, and streams,
And from a thousand marshes, pools, and lakes,
Such as I am, Ondoso, of soft spirits
The humid, floating ruler, now on wing,
Here even I attend, to reverence
The subterranean power.

VOLAN. Lo, from the dark abyss to lightsome air,
Great Lucifer now rising, and with him
The most sagacious band
Of hellish counsellors.

SCENE THE SECOND.

LUCIFER, FIERY, AIRY, EARTHLY, AQUATIC, INFERNAL SPIRITS, *and* VOLANO.

LUCIFER. Ah light! detested light!
Yet once again I look toward thy rays,
The sightless mole of hell,
And like a frantic angel,
Dazzled and grieved at heart,
Immortally I die.

BELIAR. Of what dost thou complain? why grieves our god?
Clear up thy countenance, and see around
How thy palms shake; thy banners float in air,
Signs of that valour which has conquer'd heaven,
And now in triumph may enjoy the world;

Ah too imperfect is the victor's glory,
If he exult not in his victory.

LUCIFER. Destructive victory! unworthy boast!
Laughter to weeping turn'd,
Is that which thou esteem'st the praise of hell.
Ah, Heaven's high power has found
A new expedient, to our endless shame,
To make our vanquished foe remain the victor,
And triumph, though defeated.

MIRIM. What barbed arrows in my wounded heart,
Great Lord, hast thou enfixt!

LUCIFER. Ah! for no other purpose have I called you
From realms of air and fire,
From earth, from water, and the central depths,
Save that we might project in council here
How man may fall entirely overwhelm'd,
If to destroy him by the fruit I fail'd.

DIGRIGNAN. Ah how can Adam live,
If he indeed has eat the fruit forbidden,
Condemning him to death?
Now well may we exclaim,
That Heaven this day inures itself to falsehood.

LUCIFER. Hear it, oh hell, and shudder at the sound,
And let thy lively joys now turn to languor.
Tell me, thou Beliar, how seems to thee,
After the tasted fruit, man on the sudden
Discover'd naked, and amid the branches
Of thickest growth hastening to hide his shame?

BELIAR. In viewing his own nakedness, he shews us
The tasted fruit has robb'd him of all grace;
The very foliage where he hides informs him
He is become a beast,
And, like a beast, is doom'd in death to lose
His body and his soul.

LUCIFER. Thou, Coriban, relate why man has form'd
With the fig's ample leaf
A mantle for his waist.

CORIBAN. I'll tell you, 'tis the nature of the fig
To rise not high, and prove of short duration;
Still less may man expect to glory's height
To raise himself; for short shall be his date.

All the contentious elements at war,
Occasion'd by his sin, now in their conflict
Shall overwhelm him, and the hope with souls
More to embellish heaven shall be in vain.

LUCIFER. And thou, Ferea, what denotes the serpent,
Whom in his anger God is pleased to curse?

FEREA. I will be brief in telling all that's true:
When he pronounced a curse upon the serpent,
Man had already heard his malediction;
And thus to that he added,
Prone on thy belly, serpent, thou shalt grovel,
As if to man suggesting,
Dark as a riddling God, man is of clay;
And clay shall now be destitute of soul,
As destitute of soul each other reptile.

LUCIFER. Thou, Solobrico, tell me, what think'st thou
Of this strange speech to man?
Thou by thy sweat must gain
The bread that forms thy food.

SOLOBRICO. This bread to us discovers
The life of man's frail body,
A body form'd of earth, as now indeed
Grain must be drawn from earth to make this bread
The vital element:
His sweat denotes the element of water,
His countenance is air, his labour fire;
So that this dark expression
Of being doom'd to gain his bread by sweat,
To man says, thou shalt live,
In many griefs and troubles,
A short space in the world;
Then is thy lot to die,
Turning again to earth, air, water, fire.

LUCIFER. And, Gismon, thou, to woman when he said,
That with the pangs of birth
She should produce her offspring, say what meaning
Lurk'd in that new expression to bring forth?

GISMON. This said expression birth
Denotes the being born,
When her young progeny shall rise to light:
He also might denote a new partition

By this new word bring forth,
Innumerable pains,
In which the suffering parents
Shall both participate to rear their children.
Of body and of soul
The certain death I see in this expression:
That this may be, turning to man he said,
That he should die, and then to Eve he added,
That she with bitter anguish should bring forth.
Now this mysterious saying nothing means,
If not that man is meant
By death corporeal, and his frail companion
By death that strikes the soul;
Thus from mortality,
With loss reciprocal, the soul is taken:
And thus, when each has languish'd,
The body in its dying,
The soul in its departure,
Leaving at length its transient dear abode;
So verified shall be the mighty sentence
From him the mighty judge,
Of bringing forth with dire excess of pain.

LUCIFER. All you, that most sagacious
I reckon'd once in my infernal kingdoms,
I find now least sagacious.
To thee I turn, Arsiccio, tell me now
What means that mystery,
The cursing of the earth?

ARSICCIO. And to the blame of man I too return;
Can it be true this cursing of the earth?
What does the mystery mean?
Means it indeed the earth?
Foolish is he who thinks so! what offence
Has she committed? no 'twas not the earth
Was cursed, but only man, who is of earth;
And human nature all is cursed with him;
And that decree, it should no more bear fruit,
Was utter'd for no purpose
But to proclaim to man,
That, as a sinner, heaven is shut against him.

LUCIFER. Arion, thou exalt thyself in air;

Do thou inform me why with skins of beasts
This man and his companion were array'd.
ARION. This clearly shows to us
That God no longer makes account of man.
Hear me, unconquer'd sovereign,
This clothing Adam with the lifeless skins
Of fleeced animals to us imports,
That, as with dying beast,
The body, soul, and spirit, also die,
So death shall also prove
The dread destroying ravager of men
By the dread fruit's effect.
LUCIFER. Ondoso, thou who art profest a diver,
Canst thou pervade the depth
Of these confused decrees? inform me now
What means the mystery
Of cherubim with fiery falchions
Forbidding entrance to the gates of Eden.
ONDOSO. No mystery, great king,
But the destruction of the human race,
Portended by these falchions.
They mean indeed the death
Of man's terrestrial form,
And their fierce blades of fire
Damnation to his soul:
So that when struck by death
The body shall be ashes, and the soul
Shall by eternal justice
Within the dark Avernus
Become a prisoner, lost to light and heaven.
Now blest are we, since we behold it clear,
That, rising to the realms above, 'tis ours
To make Olympus joyful, since when we
Resign'd our seat in heaven,
At those exalted gates
No armed cherubim was placed to guard;
Thus all is justly weigh'd,
And in an even balance;
For now the world's inhabitants shall be
The birds, the fish, the beasts:
Of the Tartarean gulf

Man, and his numerous race;
We only on gay wing shall soar to heaven,
On this supreme condition,
That heaven's great Lord shall pardon ask of thee,
Repenting of his error, and that both
Shall rule the realm of heaven,
Both Lucifer and God.

LUCIFER. Tarpalce, say what thinkest thou of man?

TARPALCE. 'Tis not my sentiment man can be saved.
In short, this man has sinn'd;
And he who draws from man his flesh and life,
He shall be call'd a sinner;
And he who is a sinner shall be damn'd;
And since it is denied
That these the seats of heaven, that once were ours,
Neglected shall be left, and void of glory,
Well may we re-ascend, with brave condition,
The heaven once more returning to itself.
Sufficiently we know
It otherways would still be void of splendour,
Since God no longer knows
What to achieve that may embellish heaven.

LUCIFER. Alas! 'tis fit that I
From a deep silence now
Loose this chill'd tongue, chill'd, though it seems to burn
With cruel deadly rage!
My heart is bursting only at the thought
Of what I must relate:
Now with great efforts vanquishing myself,
Let that be heard which anguish bids me utter!
The fear he felt to show himself when naked
Was from the mighty shame
To see himself bespotted
With sin's deformity.
His flight with rapid step towards the woods,
As to the sea the swollen torrent flies,
Denotes his great repentance of his sin.
That leafy screen, in which he hid himself,
Denotes his coarse and rustic penitence,
Till with long abstinence he shall atone
With punishment for sin.

The harsh and ample leaf
Of fig, still more expressive,
Tells it will be man's lot
With coarse and hairy vest
To cover every fault;
And as upon the fig,
Among its harshest leaves, a dulcet fruit
Arises, thus at last shall man himself,
Midst all his penitence, enjoy the fruit
So sweet and dear of heaven, that he had lost:
The verdure of the leaf
Affords a certain hope
That man may have of God's returning grace;
That he at length in heaven
Shall know a blooming spring of highest glory.
The double summons, thus bestow'd on man,
Tells us he shall have time
To weep, though sinning, his repented sin.
If he was pleased to execrate the serpent,
There hell may understand
That it was not the serpent
Who then offended God; from whence he said
Prone on thy belly, serpent, thou shalt creep!
Alas, too clearly saying,
Quit every hope, O ye that now abide
By the infernal streams,
Quit every hope of heaven!
And when between this woman and the serpent
His word denounced, alas! eternal war,
Ah then he comprehended human nature,
Which bears a female name.
What then are now our direst enemies?
Inhabitants of heaven!
So that our most tormenting adversary
Is now no other but this human nature
Made an eternal denizen of heaven.
What more, alas! have I the force to speak it?
The saying that the woman
Shall one day bruise his head,
With mystery severe
Shows us the incarnation of the Word.

Saying to man his bread
He now by sweat must earn, is it not saying
After hard toil thou shalt to heaven ascend?
Alas! perhaps it means
That bread may life denote,
Since man is destined to have life in heaven.
If for the apple God was pleased to say
That man transgressing shall be doom'd to death,
He of the body spake;
The spirit is immortal.
When in his speech to Eve
He doom'd her to bring forth, that indicates
Eternity assign'd to human nature.
The guard of cherubim that wheel around
Their fiery swords, forbidding
All feet to tread on that delicious garden,
I would declare to mean—
But to cold marble turns my faltering tongue.

BRIAR. Shall it be said that Briar checks his tongue?
Believe not thou, our Lord,
That man to heaven shall soar!
Too feeble are his wings;
Had he no other bar,
I am alone prepared to give him death,
Arm'd with a mighty club, or with a stone,
Though sure to be condemn'd
Myself alone to all the pains of hell;
Since I can well discern,
That in continual thinking of my glory,
Infernal pain will turn to heavenly joy.

LUCIFER. O noble, generous ardour!
Trust me, not less avails
A heart magnanimous for glory panting,
Than a decided triumph.
Let us remain in hell,
Since there is more content
To live in liberty, though all condemn'd,
Than, as his vassals, blest.
Up from these filthy dregs,
A hideous mass, sulphureous, rough, and round,
Let there be raised to light;
So wills the mighty chieftain of damnation.

SCENE THE THIRD.

The infernal Cyclops, armed with Hammers, and all those of the preceding Scene.

BEHOLD the smiths of hell,
That, worn with toil and smoke,
To heaven are raising this enormous ball,
Now fashion'd in Avernus.

LUCIFER. Now as a perfect rival
Of God, I will, that Lucifer be seen.
He highly seated, on his throne in heaven,
To us reveal'd the world, and thence arose
Our banishment from heaven, and I this day,
Raising Vain Glory to a throne of splendour,
Have now contrived to exterminate mankind.
If he from nothing made the ample world
I too a nothing will now make of worlds,
Or of the world a nothing.
Now let this dark and misty mass dissolve,
And in the place of elements, and heavens,
Of all the stars, the moon, and radiant suns,
Let there come forth a strange unfinish'd monster.

ONDOSO. O what a stormy burst, what monsters rise,
All horrible and hissing,
With forms enormous howling,
And breathing blasts of fire!

LUCIFER. Thou that now seem'st a dark and hideous monster,
I will array thee in a human semblance,
Though but of vapour form'd;
Thou shalt be call'd the World.
Instead of shags, and vestments wild,
Sweat thou beneath a load of gems and gold,
For well I know how henceforth in my service
Gold may be used in tempting man to sin.
Such thou shalt have around thee;
On thee I will bestow voice, gesture, snares,
In strictest tie to catch
The human foot of clay that walks incautious;
And all that thou canst wish
To overwhelm this man, all thou shalt have.

Thou beast of monstrous shape,
Thou like a lovely damsel shalt appear,
Thou shalt be call'd the Flesh,
With wiles, deceits, and ardours in thy train,
Whence man may fall in unbecoming errors;
And, monster, thou that art
So hideous and so meagre, Death be call'd:
Be thou all human bone,
All ice, all madness, all a mass of horror
To the unhappy sinner.
Ye four terrific forms, of wildest semblance,
For horrid deeds I chuse you,
Ill omen'd words, and acts of cruel nature,
Your fashion to display.
Up, up, let each return
To his own element, his proper sphere!
Come! why delay to fire?
Haste all with me,
And hence in silence glide,
Abandoning the light.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

ADAM. Wretch that thou art! now cast thine eyes around,
No longer shalt thou see
Aught to console thy pain.
Ah! in that very thought,
Sorrow so wounds my heart,
My tears so overwhelm me,
That in a sigh I seem to breathe my last.
Where, Adam, is thy beauty? where thy grace,
That made thee dear to angels and to God?
Ah! thou alone hast dared
To stain thy nature, and to wound thy soul!
Is this, is this the way
To please that Being who on thee bestow'd
Whate'er thou seest around thee, with a promise
To give thee in the stars a heavenly mansion?
Rather on fruit forbidden
To feed, than on the living words of God
Has been thy choice; and lo,
Thou from an angel to a beast art changed!

And, more than other beasts,
Driven as a monster from this pleasant garden,
And thus in skins array'd; alas! I dare not
Lift up my eyes to heaven, yet it becomes me,
Low on my knees, to view the good I lost,
And in lamenting say,
Dear seat of God, thou should'st have been the seat
Of Adam also; but thou art lost to me;
Thee have I lost, alas! and found in stead
Of thee, both death and hell.
O hide, in pity hide thy splendour, Heaven!
Since Adam is a sinner.
Conceal your light, ye stars;
Vanish, thou moon and sun;
Eternal horror be the fate of man,
Since Adam is a sinner.
Now in the faithful choir of angels cease
Ye soothing melodies,
Since Adam is a sinner.
Behold, with pain behold,
How, from thy dread offence,
All things this day appear to change their form,
All hold thee in abhorrence,
All from thy aspect fly!
Ah, thou mayst well exclaim,
There, from the verdant stem and parent tree,
The rose is fled, and leaves thee but the thorn!
There sinks each flower, within the grassy earth
Hiding its head precipitate, and scarce
Where it display'd its pride now shews its stalk:
Well mayst thou add, in plucking here the apple
Thou gavest a fatal shake to every tree,
Then bringing to the ground
Each leaf, each flower, and every blooming fruit.
Ah, how despoil'd and waste
All now appears to me; all shade and horrors;
Produced by man's rebellion to his God.
Where, where are now the gay and sprightly birds
That on their painted plumes
Round me were used to sport and flutter here?
Ah, your closed wings I see

Amidst the thickest leaves, and fearing all
The deadly snares of Adam.
Where, where is now the tiger, bear, and lion,
The wolf, the pard, and thousand other beasts,
Obedient all to man, and in his train?
Alas! now made voracious
Of human carnage and of smoking blood
I now behold you all,
Sharpening 'gainst man the talon and the tooth.
Where now, ah where, their young
May all the fleecy kind
Let fall in safety? for, alas, I see
No longer will they offer
Their milky dugs to thee, their dugs or offspring,
Since to escape from man,
Now, now, I see them eager,
Man turn'd into a wolf
By having seized an apple.
All fly, and all abhor thee,
And from thee, barbarous, learn barbarity.
Hence in the earth and sea,
Beyond their custom, now
All fish, and all the beasts,
To battle seem to invite thee;
See now the wolf and lamb,
She who of late not far from him might wander,
See how she bleating flies from his unfaithful
Tusk, now expecting bloody violence!
Behold the hare, behold
How timid she is made, and the dog fierce
In striving for her life,
While more than native fear to flight inclines her.
Behold that dusky beast,
That with white tusks of an enormous size
Extends its weighty jaw,
That now forgetting to revere the moon,
Intractable, ferocious
Beyond its native temper,
Rushes in anger with its fibrous trunk
That serves it for a nose,
Against the horn which the rhinoceros

Sharpens of hardest stone!
Behold the sea enraged,
Now by thy rage, the very sea inflamed
Takes up the fish within its watery arms,
And in a thousand caverns,
Against the mossy stones
Now strikes, and now entombs them.
At length, behold that ox,
That now beneath thy crooked yoke of wood
To turn the sterile earth
Thou must contrive to couple,
See how he darts an eye of fire upon thee,
And foaming now, and panting, fiercely points
His crooked horn, and threatens thee with death.
And more, yet more, the Earth
Provokes thee now to conflict,
Thanks to thy dire offence;
And since her bosom must by thee be wounded,
Strives with thee for thy viands, arm'd herself
With thistles and with thorns.
I've sinn'd, O Lord, I've sinn'd!
I've sinn'd, and for my fault
My mournful heart in weeping I distill.
Why wretched do I speak? see what a band
Of beasts made barbarous,
Of hostile beasts, now wet
With crimson's deadly stain,
I see around me, darting from their caves!
Alas! what see I more? wretch that I am!
Behold, from them affrighted Eve is flying!

SCENE THE FIFTH.

ADAM *and* EVE.

EVE. Ah whither shall I fly? and where conceal me?
ADAM. Haste to my arms, O haste!
Let him who sinn'd like thee,
Like thee become of savage beasts the prey!
EVE. Ah, every path becomes
The pass of death to one of life unworthy;
Here in this cavern's depth,
Here let us plunge, O Adam.

ADAM. Ah, they at length depart ; yet not from man
Will misery depart, or mortal anguish.
Oh wonderous wretchedness, e'en pleasure weeps,
Joy wears the form of sorrow
And life itself now dies.
EVE. Ah, how I grieve, O Adam!
O Heaven! what tears I shed,
How do I sigh, O God, wounded in heart,
Now, nor alive nor dead.
ADAM. But hark, what horrid roarings
Make air rebellow, and the vallies shake.

SCENE THE SIXTH.

FAMINE, THIRST, LASSITUDE, DESPAIR, ADAM, *and* EVE.

FAMINE. In vain from our quick grasp
You strive to fly, vile offspring of the earth,
And from the thousand ills that Heaven intends thee ;
Fly not, for 'tis in vain. Ye now around
Block up the paths, and guard each avenue!
Famine am I, who in this hideous form
Now shew myself to man,
To prove how keen I am,
With bitterness to poison all his sweets ;
And from the semblance I reveal, thou wretch,
Clearly shalt thou perceive,
Beyond all other creatures,
How sharply Famine's piercing shaft shall wound thee ;
And as I now devour these tender shoots
Of the young fruitful vine,
And suck, with eager thirst, the dulcet juice,
So from thy feeble bones, that now derive
Infirmity from sin,
Soon will I tear the flesh,
And suck thus fiercely from thy veins the blood.
And this fierce monster that you now behold,
Keen at the limpid fountain
To satiate its thirst, and foil'd, attempting
With harpy talon to pollute the water,
This is call'd Thirst ; and now, in such a form,
Both horrible and fierce,

To thee appears, that thou may'st comprehend
How wildly raging thou shalt feel its fury.
And this is Lassitude,
That Lassitude which now on thee shall pour
The mighty streams of sorrow.
See how her figure melts in drops of anguish,
In raising on her back
That heavy burden of enormous weight!
'Tis hers to make thee, Adam,
So worn with toil, that from thy pallid visage
The copious streams of painful sweat shall pour;
And Lassitude shall so annoy thy frame,
That thou shalt hate thy life.
Hence at the last, perforce ye both shall pass
Through unaccustom'd ways of wretchedness
To this dire monster, savage and tremendous,
Who henceforth on the earth
Shall bear of Desperation
The desperate name; look, and behold how fiercely
He in convulsion rolls, and shrieks and roars;
See how he tears his hair and grinds his teeth,
Wounds all his frame, and makes his breast re-echo
With his repeated blows!
This fierce, relentless monster
Shall so afflict thee, that thou shalt be eager
To turn, and hasten to an end more wretched:
And if, perchance, thou think'st I speak not true,
See him, who from his deep and dark domain
In blackest vapour wrapt,
Circled with globes of fire, appears before thee!

SCENE THE SEVENTH.

DEATH, ADAM, *and* EVE.

DEATH. Thou art the creature, Woman,
Who first hast summon'd me,
And with a sinful voice,
From the Tartarean shades;
Thou, perishable flesh and form of clay,
Hast call'd this fearful monster,
Of human bones compacted,

This day to look upon the light of heaven.
Say now what wouldst thou speak?
Dost thou abhor thy life?
Behold the sickle-bearer, and the sickle
That now invites thee to desert the day.
Now with a lynx's eye,
I see, in looking into future time,
To my dread name and these ungodly arms,
What fatal trophies rise.
But what! not here shall end the full perdition
With which heaven threatens thee, such mighty evils
Hell now prepares for thee,
And such excess of horrors,
That I, I who am Death,
Wish for destruction to escape their sight.
Thou art condemn'd to die,
Thy residence is Hell,
Become a rebel to thy mighty Maker.

ADAM. Oh source of tears! Oh sorrow!
Oh miserable sinner!

EVE. Ah me, most wretched Eve!
The origin of sin.

ADAM. Ah, how the heaven grows dark, how it withdraws
Its light from us, who are of light unworthy!
But ah! what flame in heaven quickens and dies,
Dazzling our sight, and sudden darts away,
A serpent all of fire?

EVE. Alas! not here the wrath of heaven shall end,
First we must suffer death.

ADAM. Ah, what rebellowing sounds I hear above!
Perchance with such a voice
Offended Heaven now drives us from the world,
And sends us banish'd to the gulfs below!
What shafts, how numberless
Strike down the woods and groves! with what wild force
The raging winds contend!
Now rushes from the sky
Water congeal'd to forceful globes of hail!

EVE. Alas! how from on high
The swelling waters pour
That rising o'er their banks,

The proud o'erflowing rivers
Now put the beasts to flight,
And in the groves and woods
Precipitately drive the fish to dwell.
ADAM. Fly! let us haste to fly
Up to those lofty mountains,
Where heaven now seems at last
Satiate with ceaseless thundering to repose.

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE THE FIRST.

THE FLESH *and* ADAM.

THE FLESH.

IF in a bosom form'd in lonely woods,
An amorous lure, the engine of deceit,
May wake a blazing spark,
And raise an inextinguishable fire;
This day to me shall shine a day of triumph,
When in desire's fierce flames
I shall behold that heart,
Which love's devouring flame yet has not touch'd.
And now if aught of potency resides
In golden tresses, or a breast of snow,
A radiant eye, a cheek of rose and lily,
And teeth of pearl, and lips that vie with coral,
In beauty, grace, allurements, arts, and gestures,
To make a wretched mortal heart their captive,
Such tresses, such a breast,
A cheek, and teeth, and lips,
And my intelligent engaging manners,
Will hold thee fetter'd in a thousand snares.
Behold, not distant far, the simple bird
I opportunely see,
Who for my tempting lure
His habitation quits, and his companion,
To fall at once by amorous deceit.
O how to earth dejected,

He bends his watery eyes in deep affliction.
Thou art not yet transfix'd
By my prevailing shaft, but now it seeks thee.

SHE SINGS.

Dearest Adam, grieved and fainting,
Let my song thy spirit comfort!
And with thee,
O let me
Lead a life of true enjoyment!
Gentle Adam, son of glory,
Hearken, hearken! meek and humble
Sounds the artless song unpolish'd
That invites thee
But to kindness;
Give, O give me ease and quiet,
Gentle Adam, son of glory!
But if thou with different feelings
Wish to wound this tender bosom,
See it naked!
Strike! O cruel,
Wherefore pause you? Haste to kill me!
By your hand I fall contented.

ADAM. O thou all-seeing Lord,
If real grief may touch thee,
Survey the contrite sinner,
Who through his eyes distills his heart in tears.
No! of thy mercy do not close the hand,
Since what sustains me now must fall and perish.
Behold, behold, dread Lord! unhappy man,
Who from the fatal fruit
Has to encounter all the snares of hell:
Defend him: he is thine, thine thou hast call'd him,
And having once been thine, thou must have loved him.

THE FLESH.

Go, full of terror and desire! I must
With the impetuous be meek and coy,
And with the timid bold, and urge him on,
Till love's keen canker-worm
Prey on the simple heart,
That never yet has felt the sting of passion.

ADAM. Who may this be? alas, both hope and fear
Urge me to seek, and bid me still be silent.

THE FLESH.

This lowliness, and this affected coyness
With an undaunted lover, this presumption
With one more soft and timid, are so prevailing,
They seem two strong incentives
To kindle the fierce flame of love's desire.
Whence I a skilful mistress
Brandish my tongue,
And give a mortal wound.
Say why art thou so pensive,
O my most gentle Adam?
ADAM. Restrain, restrain thy step
Whoe'er thou art, nor with thy songs inveigle
Him, who has only cause for ceaseless tears.

THE FLESH.

Without thy strict injunction,
Creature of noble semblance,
To stand aloof from thee
Grieves me; I want the courage to approach
The flowery bloom of thy engaging face,
Fearing lest serpents in thy radiant eyes,
For ever on the watch
With stings devoid of pity, pierce my heart.
But every bitter root
That leads thee to suspicion,
I from thy breast will pluck, for know, I am
The very soul of love, yes! of that love
Which has induced thy Maker
From nothing to make all:
And since in that debased
Condition into which thy sorrows sunk thee,
This love alone can draw thee,
To the low world I took my flight from heaven.
Perchance thou may'st suppose, enjoying love,
That thou must therefore lead a savage life,
A lover of the brutes;
No, no, adorning all thy form with flowers,

And wearing on thy locks a wreath of palm,
Thou shalt enjoy a vest of gold and silver,
Such as I wear, and such as high in heaven
The radiant tissue shines, when sun and moon
Weave their united rays.
Thine eyes shall sparkle with resplendent fire,
On thy warm cheek a graceful blush shall glow,
And when in ecstasy thy lip is press'd,
Its richer hue shall make the coral pale.
Say at the very sound dost thou not feel
Thy heart dissolve in amorous joy? I see
Thou art delighted, Adam.

ADAM. I love, in truth I love,
But only burn with love
For my almighty Maker.

THE FLESH.

The soul alone can love,
Can love this heavenly lord:
But in these sublunary woodland scenes,
Love has delights of a corporeal kind.

ADAM. The love thou speak'st of it is mine to prove
With my beloved consort.

THE FLESH.

Yes! that is true; yet only sons of death
Can spring from your affection.

ADAM. Sad fruit of my offence!

THE FLESH.

Ah, but immortal children
From me shall spring, if thou wilt yield to me.
Amidst these herbs and flowers
Be our's sublimest love!
Simple! extend thy hand,
Behold, and touch my breast that thou wilt find
Far different from the breast of mortal Eve.
If thou wilt love, shall I not make thee worthy
Of the unbounded joy
To steal thee from thyself? Ah come, ah come,
To this pure bosom that I show thee, Adam!

Oh say to me, I love thee!
Perchance thou may'st believe,
Each man to spring from thee
Ought to be happy with a single woman;
Each woman too contented
To love one man alone!
Simple, if such thy thought:
For all the sweets of love
Become more poignant by the change of lovers.
See how each animal, that dwells on earth,
Leads a delicious life,
By changing its affection;
And thou, sole sovereign of each living creature,
Shalt thou content thee with a single lover?

ADAM. Let sorrow's flame convert my heart to ashes,
Rather than it may burn with double love!
Hence then! depart! for a blind mole am I
To all thy proffer'd beauty;
And truly in thy presence
I feel no touch of love.

THE FLESH.

O thou most icy heart!
Now kindle with the flame of my affection.
Behold this ample cavern of the earth;
Lo, it was made for love; whate'er it holds
Within its spacious circuit,
Of love perceives the fire.
Love rules the earth, the sea, the air, and fire,
With endless love a hundred genial stars,
Not moving from their sphere,
Scatter their flames through heaven;
And other wandering planets
Through those exalted regions
Direct their golden steps.
What river, fount or stream,
Unconscious flows and destitute of love?
What frozen sea does love not penetrate
With his imperious ardour?
What glowing ocean does not oft discover
A visage pale and wan,

As if infirm with love?
What flower, what plant, or stone,
Wishes for love in vain, of love deprived?
Whate'er inhabits heaven, or earth, or sea,
Burns in the flame of love.
Behold that sportive bird of painted wing,
That goes with fluttering joy from bough to bough,
And in his song declares he sings of love!
Behold the sweet and oft repeated kisses
Of those two doves, what dost thou think of them?
Of love they are the kisses.
The beauteous peacock see,
That gaily fondles his attractive mate;
He whirls the plume of love.
Hear you that nightingale, does she not mourn?
Now does she not exult? now 'tis her joy
With her melodious warble
To stun the vallies, and make glad the hills.
Simple, what dost thou think?
'Tis love that makes her tuneful.
Behold that river with its banks of flowers,
Its stream of purest silver,
And of fine gold its sand;
Behold, dost thou not see within its bosom
A thousand fishes glide?
They lead the dance of love.
Behold that sportive goat, that butting runs
Exulting o'er the plain,
His conflicts are from love.
Look there, and see amidst a thousand folds
Those close entwisted snakes,
That in a single being seem combined:
Coy Adam, even these
Weave the close web of love.
Behold, at length where yonder clustering vine
Her amorous arms around the elm extends,
She also burns with love.
Even that flower, that ever courts the sun,
Thus in its glances speaks,
I dart the glance of love!
And thou unmelting soul! wilt thou alone,

Wilt thou disdain to feel
That which all creatures prove?
Nought can resist my golden pungent dart,
Nor air, nor fire, nor sea, nor earth, nor heaven.

SCENE THE SECOND.

LUCIFER, THE FLESH, *and* ADAM.

Now burn with love, and bless the fond desire
Of her, whom the Creator
Made blazing all with love.

ADAM. And who art thou, whose thick and bushy locks
And beard of silver shade thy head and face?

LUCIFER. Adam, I am a man; I am thy brother,
But of a higher rank;
Since I have drawn the vital air of heaven,
Thou in this lower world;
For well thou know'st, that station
Affords an airy grandeur to our birth.
In years too I surpass thee;
My voice too, and my language
Declare me old, as these my locks of silver:
Now if all elder things
Are deem'd superior to their successors,
In this my merit must be more than thine.

ADAM. How I should answer thee, my tongue knows not,
Thou lofty Lord of Heaven!
Since my sad error with so thick a cloud
Of ever-during fear
O'ershades my eyes and heart.

LUCIFER. Oh, Adam, do not fear!

THE FLESH.

Wait thou a little! soon
That shall be known to thee, which now is hid:
All for thy good alone,
And to save man from many griefs and pains.

LUCIFER. Now, Adam, understand,
How having made me in his lofty heaven,
He next created thee;
For a new wish he form'd
To make another man, and give the world

To be his grateful residence, and then
Clay he made flesh, and of that flesh made man:
Then from the side of man he woman drew,
And then ordain'd the law
Prohibiting the apple,
Which if he tasted, man
Must be deprived of his celestial home.
Hence is it thou hast felt,
Hence is it thou hast seen
Clouds rolling through the air,
And fiery scintillations in the sky,
Rebellowing thunder and its rattling bolts,
And the tempestuous crash.
These mournful pomps of horror,
Say, say, what canst thou think
That they portend below to new-made man?
All these appear'd in heaven, because from heaven
Now the celestial Adam is dislodged.
As to terrestrial man,
(As if the world would drive him from the world,)
The earth itself grew barren,
And every fruit grew harsh,
The waters full of turbulence and gall,
And every creature sharpened
His beak, or tusk, or talon.
Behold at last, O heaven! a pair of brothers,
The citizens of earth.
O, Adam, do not grieve,
That I by fault of thine have now lost heaven,
Since to have haply found
Thee, my beloved brother,
Now makes me not to feel the loss of heaven;
And happy we will live
In this, a sylvan, and a sunny scene.
Or emulous of heaven, in God's own heaven
Raised to a noble seat,
I will, that we ascend,
And underneath our feet
Joy to behold the congregated choirs,
Even like the blessed choirs,
The children of this man.

Now if we wish success to our desires,
And should delight to see
Springing like grass, and frequent as the flowers,
Our children rapidly arise to light,
Turn we our eyes and heart
To this fair goddess of delightful love;
For easy 'tis to her
To form in sweet array the troops we wish.
A plant so sweetly fruitful
Is not; nor is the Earth herself so fertile;
Nor does it raise so soon
Its nutritive production,
As she will raise, if we are so disposed,
The fruit of lovely children.
Then to the lily whiteness
Of her enchanting cheek
Advance the living roses of the lip!
And of so sweet a flower
For this love's goddess let us form a garland!
Oh to the living ruby
Of this sweet fount of kisses,
If he for kisses thirst,
The hart of love shall run,
There bathe his thirsty lip,
And there on kisses quench his mighty ardour.

THE FLESH.

Why this delay, O Adam?
Approach, approach, my heart!
Satiate thy thirst of love!

LUCIFER. What! dost thou fear, and tremble?
Now let the empty cloud
Of all thy vain suspicion
Disperse before the sun of heavenly truth!
Extend, extend thy arms
And in one dear embrace encircle both!
Happy who pants for thee! alas, what dost thou?
At once thou givest, and again draw'st back
Thy blandishments, like lightning,
That in appearing flies and vanishes.

ADAM. What fear assaults my heart I cannot tell,
But feel that like a timid deer I pant
At the dire barking of blood-thirsty hounds.

SCENE THE THIRD.

CHERUBIM, GUARDIAN OF ADAM, ADAM, THE FLESH, *and* LUCIFER.

CHERUBIM. 'Tis time to succour man: Alas! what dost thou,
Most miserable Adam?
LUCIFER. Why dost thou silent stand? what are thy thoughts?
ADAM. I seem'd to hear a plaintive, pleasing voice,
That in this manner spoke: Alas! what dost thou?
Most miserable Adam!

THE FLESH.

A vain desire, and dread
Now lords it o'er thy heart.
CHERUBIM. Since thy heart trembles, evils must be nigh.
ADAM. I tremble at deceit.
LUCIFER. Thou must have lost thy reason,
If thou canst fear thy mistress, and thy brother.
CHERUBIM. Fear! for they are thy foes.
ADAM. Thou say'st thou art my brother, and she my mistress.
But if ye were my foes?—

THE FLESH.

Cruel to treat us so!
What enemy can man now have on earth?
CHERUBIM. The enemy of Eve.
ADAM. He, who occasion'd misery to Eve,
And he, who was the cause, that from this brow
The painful sweat must now descend in streams.
LUCIFER. So little wilt thou trust us?
So lightly dost thou love us?
Yet it is fit thy fault
Call forth the tears to flow into thy bosom.

THE FLESH.

With treachery 'tis fit to treat with man
In gesture, tears, and voice,
Only to plunge him in Tartarean fires.

ADAM. They weep in such abundance,
That every tear, they shed, strikes on my bosom;
And though like marble hard,
I fear, I fear, that if it does not split,
It may at least be soften'd.
ANGEL. These are the poisonous waters of Avernus,
(Incautious man!) that from their eyes distill.
LUCIFER. Ah Heaven! why didst thou form me?
Why didst thou join my lot
With this ungrateful, misbelieving Adam,
That feels not his own good, or my affliction?
ADAM. Restrain thy grief, thy tears! and suffer me,
(If it is true, thy soul desires my good,)
To speak to thee apart,
And I to thee will open all my thoughts.
LUCIFER. Hast thou no other wish?
ADAM. No! I require no more.
LUCIFER. Behold us now apart! behold us far!
If any other wish
Strike thee, command! behold! we are obedient
Not to thy words alone, but to thy nod.
ADAM. What wouldst thou, O my heart?
What is thy wish, my soul?
Now quiet thy desires! quiet thy pains!
CHERUBIM. Tell him, if he's thy brother,
And both descendants from the starry sphere,
They should with thee, in pure and perfect zeal,
Adore the Maker of the heaven and earth.
ADAM. That which my heart suggests, I now will do.

THE FLESH.

O tempter! now I fear
Some singular mischance.
CHERUBIM. Now, now the fraud is known.
ADAM. Now, brother, if you wish,
With this your pure celestial paramour,
Hail'd as the soul of love,
That I should think the one an heavenly Adam,
And her the only love of our great Maker,
Now bend with me your humble knees to earth!
LUCIFER. How in one instant can two opposites,

Humility and pride,
Together reign in me?
ADAM. Can Adam so delay?
LUCIFER. I'll tell thee; ah, it seems a thing unfit
That a celestial knee
Should bend to this vile earth.
ADAM. Thou hast already told me,
That in the high celestial plains above
Thou must no longer dwell,
But here with me enjoy delightful days,
Amid these sunny spots;
Let it not then displease thee
With earthly habitudes
To have thy breast, O Adam! fraught like mine!

THE FLESH.

Well dost thou speak, O Adam! I am ready
To pay thee prompt obedience.
LUCIFER. And I will also show,
This fair one's pleasure shall my pleasure be.
ADAM. Behold I bow myself! behold me bend!
Now let united hands be raised to heaven.
LUCIFER. To make palm meet with palm, in vain we strive.
ADAM. In truth there seems much pain.
LUCIFER. Perhaps you wish
Our hands united thus?
ADAM. No! what,—do you not see
That both united form a knot together,
Finger entwisting finger?

THE FLESH.

Perhaps you choose them thus?
ADAM. Alas! the example,
That with my hands before your eyes I show you,
Serves it so little? heavens! what do I see?
So destitute of sense
Are heavenly creatures?
LUCIFER. Now behold them join'd.

THE FLESH.

In truth I cannot tell,
If Hell this day more tries the strength of Adam,
Or Adam more torments the powers of Hell.

LUCIFER. Vigour, soul! animation!
For in proportion as our strife is bloody,
So will our palm of conquest rise in glory.
ADAM. Why do you thus apart
In such confusion speak?
Now raise your eyes to heaven,
And with delight contemplate
Of all those starry sapphires
The pure resplendent rays,
And those fair blessed seats!
Alas, thou shutt'st thine eyes,
That stream upon the ground.
LUCIFER. O Adam, cease at length!
Those rays so splendid dazzle us too much.
ADAM. This is my foe: I now discern him well.
The eagle of the sun
Is used with pleasure on the sun to gaze;
And thou, an heavenly eagle,
Accustom'd to the brightest rays of heaven,
Dost thou disdain, or shun them
Dazzled, and in confusion?

THE FLESH.

Who knows what splendours in high heaven are kindled?
He, who surveys them oft,
Is satiated at last;
There's nought created so divine and dear,
That in long intercourse becomes not tiresome.
ADAM. Celestial good ne'er satiates, but delights,
And magnifies itself in God's perfection;
As the fair landscape's beauty
(Though 'tis a low example)
Becomes more perfect, and more flowery seems,
When the sun gilds the vallies and the hills.
But as I wish what ye too both desire,
Now let your eyes be closed
And with your opening lips pronounce these words:
"Thee I adore."
LUCIFER. Go on!
ADAM. Say then "Thee I adore."
LUCIFER. Go on! for such a memory have I,

That by a single effort
I will repeat thy words.
ADAM. I am contented;
Yet thou observe my words! Thee I adore,
Thus with my knees to earth, and streaming eyes,
Lord of the empyrean!
Great sovereign of the heavens, and only God!
Holy, firm, formidable, just, and pious!
And still dost thou delay?
LUCIFER. I meditate thy speech,
Which to me seems so long,
I doubt my power to speak it.
ADAM. Shall I again pronounce it?
LUCIFER. This I cannot desire,
But find a great defect
In this imploring speech.
ADAM. Pray tell me what?
LUCIFER. No humble worshipper, not the adorer,
But the adored, 'tis just that I should be.
Alas! I can no longer
Such outrages endure:
No! who I am, I must at length reveal.

THE FLESH.

Alas! the same thing even I must do.
ADAM. Alas! what do I see?
What horrid form, amidst the clustering trees,
Does this false denizen of heaven assume?
And his immodest partner?
Alas! their winged feet
The false ones move to me,
And from their pomp and gold,
Breathe forth infuriate flame!
Succour me! help, O God!
Take pity on my failing!
LUCIFER. Fly, as thou canst, from these my rapid wings
Thy flying must be vain.
Alas! to my great grief, this day I see
Who has the prize of conquest,
Who soonest yields, and from his rival flies.
So that I well can say

To the eternal gulf,
That in this hard and perilous contention,
The toil belongs to Hell ; to man the glory.
I lose, alas! I lose: now with what face
Can this my foot be turn'd again to hell?

THE FLESH.

Ah! sad and dire event! ah strife! ah death!

LUCIFER. Yes, yes, 'tis just, that my infernal rage
Should all now turn on me,
Since I have vainly tried
To work the condemnation of this man.
But can this be? ah! (hard is my belief,)
Exalted providence!

CHERUBIM. Thou canst not mount, fierce monster!
I affirm it,
By this high brandish'd dart of penal fire.

LUCIFER. Ah, for the seats of hell
I spread my rapid wings.

CHERUBIM. And I these happier wings lucid and light,
Will exercise around
For man's protection, and in scorn of hell.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

THE WORLD.

How fine I now appear! no more I seem
A monster now of horror,
But of a lofty spot
The blissful habitant, and call'd *The World;*
That so adorn'd and splendid,
Amidst thy prime delights,
Laughter, and songs, and amorous affections,
My snares of silver, and my nets of gold
I may extend for man,
That he may slide and fall, to rise no more ;
And try in vain to heaven
Again to rise upon the wings of zeal.
And should he seem for ever
Bent to survey the lovely azure heaven,
The sun's bright lustre, and the lunar ray,
And trembling stellar fires,

I will delude him so
With other lovely skies, that from the first
Quick he shall turn his view.
I will, that my fair heaven
Shall be of living sapphire; there shall shine
A sun of bright pyropus, and a moon
Form'd of the beamy diamond's spotless light.
A thousand and a thousand sparkling stars,
Of jewels rich and rare;
And if amidst this lightning it may thunder,
And burning bolts may seem to dart around,
My lightning be the ruby,
My thunder sounding silver,
With thunderbolts of gold, and storms of pearl!
As a proud sovereign of so rich a heaven,
The World shall still exult,
And this new man shall bend to me in worship;
And thus of these my pomps,
My luxuries, and joys,
The numerous sons of man, become enamour'd,
Shall never know repose;
But with destructive force
Each shall endeavour of his wretched brother
To gain the envied finery and wealth.
Man I behold already for this gold,
And for the world's delights,
In horrid mansion full of smoke and fire,
Tempering the deadly steel;
Now at the anvil, see!
How striking frequent with his iron mace,
He forms his coat of mail; makes it his vest,
And for destruction draws the blade of steel.
Another, see! converting
Cold iron into fire,
Tapers, and twists it round;
And now an hatchet forms; now see him eager
To level trees and woods,
And now, with numerous planks,
Behold him raise a work
Fit to sustain the fury of the sea.
Others I see toiling to pass o'er alps,

To pass o'er mountains, and the riven rock:
Leeches that prey on ore,
And from earth's bosom suck great veins of gold.
Lo! others in the deep
Trying the fertile sea, plunge through the waves,
Fearless encountering its tempestuous pride,
If they from crusty shell, or craggy rock
May coral draw, or pearl.
Ah, labour as thou wilt, and sigh, or sweat
In this pursuit of gold,
Thy cares and woes shall gather in proportion
To all thy gather'd wealth.
Lo! to preserve thy jewels and thy wealth,
Thou hidest them under earth,
And gold forbids thee to enjoy thy gold,
Hence treacherous we see
The servant to his lord,
And through his breast and heart
He thrusts the faithless sword,
Through eagerness of gold.
Hence on the table of a royal house
There stands the statue of an unicorn,
As if in scorn of man;
Since, giving safety to a mighty lord,
The beast exposes human cruelty.
Hence is it that the son,
Greedy of gold, becomes his father's foe,
Wishes him short existence,
Flies him, and steals his wealth,
So that to make him glad, his sire may pine.
Hence is it, that for gold,
Brothers, becoming frantic,
Brandish the hostile steel,
And deem this gold more precious than their blood.
Here by the blaze of gold
The eyes of woman dazzled
See not her husband, nor regard her children,
While on the wings of passion,
She with the adulterer flies, nor yet perceives
That for this gold (vile dust!)
She has resolved to quit her very flesh.

What more? what more? not only
By gold's possession thou shalt prove the foe
Of wife, of father, brother, and of friend,
But rebel even to God;
Since with intemperate zeal
Mere idols form'd of gold,
Thou shalt proclaim the only powers of heaven.
But what do I behold? blest that I am!
I see fair Eve approach! on her soft back
Bearing a load of many leafy boughs:
What she now means to do
Here will I watch, conceal'd amidst this bower.

SCENE THE FIFTH.

EVE *and* THE WORLD.

EVE. Canst thou presume, afflicted, wretched Eve,
To the bright sun to raise again thine eyes?
No! no! thou art unworthy well thou seest:
Thou couldst behold him once,
And gaze delighted on his golden splendour:
Now if thou darest to view him,
His radiance dazzles thee; rather thou seem'st,
When thou hast dared to meet his potent beams,
To have thy fading eyes
Wrapt in a dusky veil.
Alas! it is too true,
That I in darkness dwell,
And in the formidable clouds of sin
I have o'erwhelm'd the light of innocence.
Ah wretched, mournful Eve!
If now thou turn'st thy foot,
Eager to taste the pure and limpid stream,
Alas, how troubled dost thou find the water,
Or else the fountain dry!
If with quick appetite thou chance to turn,
Anxious from lovely plants to pluck the fruit,
How dost thou find it crude,
Or made the dark recess of filthy worms!
If weary, 'midst the flowers
Thou seek'st to close thine eyes,

Behold! with fluttering pinions at thy feet,
A serpent 'midst the flowers darts and hisses.
Now to avoid the heat
Of the fierce sun if thou wouldst seek the shade
Of the thick wood, or of the leafy grove,
Thou fear'st the rage of monsters, and must tremble
Like the light leaf that shakes at every breeze.
And hence it is thy wish
To fasten bough to bough, and trunk to trunk,
Raising some safe asylum
From serpents, monsters, tempests, and the sun.
To you then will I turn me, verdant boughs,
That hither on my back with toil I bore,
Do you defend me now! now rise you here,
Afford a safe retreat
To Eve so wretched! Lo! I thus begin.
It will suffice, if I with tender hand
Just shadow, what with far superior strength
And more enlighten'd sense,
The sinner, Adam, here may terminate.

THE WORLD.

Abode more firm and faithful,
Hell now prepares for thee, or rather Death.
Behold, behold, how she
Employs herself in placing these green boughs!
To Eve I will unveil me:—Ah! what dost thou?
Why art thou raising thus,
Eve, gentle fair one, these thy leafy boughs?
Tell me, what wouldst thou do,
Why dost thou toil and sigh?

EVE. Alas! what do I see?
Do not approach me! no! from me be far!

THE WORLD.

What canst thou fear, O lovely,
Sweet angel of the earth?
Joy of all hearts, and honour of the world?

EVE. Thou Lord, who didst create me,
This stranger, who now rich in gold and gems
Courteous accosts me with a human face,
Do thou to me reveal;

Nor let our God consent,
That Eve again, or man,
Precipitately fall in fatal error!
Alas! with human face
An artful base deceiver
Led me to taste the interdicted apple;
And thence my heart must dread
Other infernal guile,
Since in the world one man alone exists.

THE WORLD.

Before my light, as at the radiant sun
Darkness itself is used to disappear,
Drive from thy heart this cloud,
That makes thy visage pale;
And from the lovely cave of glowing rubies,
Now closed to guard, as in the depth of Ganges,
The treasure of inestimable pearls,
Send forth thy tender sighs;
And if, thou fair one, 'tis thy wish to sigh,
Let all thy sighs be sweet!
EVE. And who art thou, so eager
To change the tears of woman into smiles?

THE WORLD.

Know, gentle fair one, you in me behold
As much as you can see,
Raising your eyes to heaven,
Or turning them to earth;
An indigested mass,
Chaos I once was call'd, now fair and fine,
Heaven, earth, and sea salute me as *The World*.
I too have had my residence amidst
The miracles above;
But O! a fault of mine,
Which now to tell thee would be out of season,
Induced the sacred Resident above
From his eternal doom in wrath to drive me;
And from a bright and fine
Trophy of Paradise,
Into a shapeless mass

Of hideous matter he converted me.
At last my mighty Maker, having seen
That my condition balanced my offence,
Bestow'd upon me soon another form,
Far from his highest heaven, and thus at once
Annihilated that tremendous prison,
Dreary and dark; he made me in exchange
The luminous gay World.

EVE. Alas! my first alarm
So deeply wounds, and lords it o'er my heart,
I know not what to credit, what to do.

THE WORLD.

Now, since there's nothing that to me affords
Such infinite disgust,
As to behold aught dirty and neglected,
I pray thee, lovely fair, be it thy study
With purple, gold, and robes adorn'd with pearl,
To grace thy gentle form, and cast to earth
Those skins of animals that shock the sight.
Observe how much more pleasing and majestic
Man may be render'd by a graceful dress!
Compared to me, dost thou not seem a beast?
Rather among the beasts
Dost thou not seem the vilest animal?
Dost thou not see, that every abject creature,
Or of the foaming sea,
Or of the fields of air,
Or of the woods and mountains,
Are deck'd with humid scales,
Gay feathers, shaggy skins, or painted bristles?
And if on earth thou wert created naked,
Yet well array'd with reason
Appear'st by noble soul, by which thou might'st
(Made empress of the world)
Deck thee with radiant gems, and robes of gold.
Too vile a mansion are the woods for thee,
In nakedness surpassing even the beasts.
For what end dost thou think,
The great exalted hand
Created in a moment

Gold, silver, and rich gems?
Perchance, perchance thou think'st
It may be right, that these
Bright wonders of the world
Rest ever buried in a blind oblivion.
No! no! thou simpleton, it is that man,
Sweating in their pursuit,
May decorate himself; and as the sun
Flames in full splendour in a sapphire sky,
Or 'mid the stars of gold
The bright and silvery moon,
He thus may glitter in this earthly heaven.
What more! behold what gems the sea conceals,
Or the rich earth embraces,
Which, tempting man to joy,
Display their rare endowments;
Whence it is just to say,
They were for man created; and if blind
Through ignorance he slights them,
Or shows himself ungrateful,
Why has such treasure been for man created?
Shall it be true, that you, the sovereign fair,
The gentle ruler of this worldly realm,
Can prove to God ungrateful? to the World
Like earth's vile offspring? Rise! assume this gold,
The topaz, ruby, pearls, and splendid purple,
Bright robes of gold, and rich habiliments!
In worldly trophies like our lofty queen
Shine, Eve, and let all creatures worship thee:
O how in viewing thee, thou radiant fair,
Cover'd with gems and gold,
I seem to joy! O how,
While you majestically move along,
The flowers appear before your feet to weave
A sweet impediment!
Rather I seem to see the stars from heaven
Innumerous descend,
Here for your feet to form a bright support.
What dost thou, pensive fair?
Now of thy radiant locks, that stream at length,
A string of jewels, of fine threads you weave,

For hearts a net of gold.
Now let a charming smile
Enliven thy sweet cheek!
Then shalt thou hear in accents of delight
The birds around miraculously say,
"O what a lip of coral!
And what fair teeth of pearl,
Has Eve's sweet mouth, so delicately small!
How sweet is her discourse,
That seems to be below, what, in high heaven,
The voice of God is to the blessed host."
Arise, arise! be warm,
Thou spring of tenderness, and flame of souls!
Come! leave! O leave the woods
To creatures of the forest;
And with resplendent brass,
And snowy shining marble,
Let a proud palace now be raised to heaven,
To form a worthy mansion for thy merit!
To make this easy to thee
The World will find not difficult. That wood,
Which you have wish'd to join,
Fearing the fury of the savage beasts,
Let that now form a seat
With walls of silver, and a roof of gold,
Of emerald its pillars,
And hung on golden hinges, gates of pearl!

EVE. Oh heaven! what do I see? what's this, O God?

THE WORLD.

What hast thou more to say? Ah, simple, enter
With light and speedy foot, there, where alone
Thou find'st a fit abode!
Then wilt thou truly be of thy great Maker,
The image and ingenious imitator,
Since he among so many
Legions in heaven, as much as he excels them
In majesty, so much himself he raised
On his exalted throne, in highest heaven.
Thus here below let man amid these tribes
Of fishes and of birds,

And of unnumber'd beasts,
Possess a mansion worthy
Both of his name and empire!

EVE. In truth when I behold your mighty pomps,
That might so soon be counted as my own,
I will not say that my high heart feels not
The goading of ambition; but in turning
My eyes upon the precept of my Father,
I will disdain, and from your proffers fly,
As from vile dirt the snowy ermine flies.
And this poor skin alone
Shall be my golden robe adorn'd with pearl;
A cave my proud abode;
The troubled water and rude herbs to me,
Dear beverage and food.
No! no! I will not to my first dread fault
Now add a second like it; making thus
A path more recent to the gulf of ruin:

THE WORLD.

O simple fair, come forth!
Come forth, ye fair and gentle virgins all,
From this my golden palace!
Be you devoted handmaids
Around this fair, and 'midst your tuneful songs
Present to her rich robes, adorn'd with gold!

SCENE THE SIXTH.

CHORUS OF NYMPHS, EVE, THE WORLD *and* ADAM.

BEHOLD in dance, O joyful World,
Little virgins;
See these maidens,
With their treasure bright and cheerful;
Hearken now how they are singing;
Eve alone invoke, and honour!
See their robes with gold inwoven;
See their vestments
Shedding lustre
From the treasure of their jewels!
Bright the crown, and rich the sceptre,
That to Eve is now presented.

If in heaven, nor sun nor planet
Shed its ardour
And its radiance,
Heaven would be a mass of horror;
But with light so pure and radiant
Heaven is term'd the seat of splendour.
He, who made so many wonders,
Fair and beauteous,
Is desirous
All that's fair to have before him:
Deck thyself then, O thou coy one,
If thy God delights in beauty.

ADAM. What dost thou, Eve, not see
That if uncautious to these charms thou yieldest,
We shall sink deeper in the snares of hell?

EVE. Alas! what do I hear?

ADAM. Hence, ye rebellious crew!
By virtue of my God depart confounded,
To the infernal realms!

CHORUS. Ah, thou must then avoid this light of day,
Thou sightless mole of hell!

THE WORLD.

Ah flesh infected!
Await, O yet await
Fit punishment to your presumptuous rage!
And hast thou dared so highly,
Thou creature of corruption,
That this bright palace which for Eve I raised,
Speaking thou hast ingulf'd,
And from the day hast banish'd
A numerous group of fair and graceful nymphs.
Come forth, now all come forth,
Ye horrid monsters, from the caves of hell!
Let us this hour display
Our utmost fortitude, and force supreme.
Now let this man be chain'd;
Fix him a prisoner in the depths of hell,
And let his victor reap the glory due.

EVE. Succour, O God! O succour!
Lord shew thy mercy to my great offence!

ADAM. Ah do not fear, my love,
But hope still hope in Heaven ; hope, for at last
Celestial grace was never slow to save.

SCENE THE SEVENTH.

LUCIFER, DEATH, THE WORLD, *and* CHORUS OF DEMONS, *armed with various Arms.*

LUCIFER. Thou fool, in vain thou toil'st
To invocate high heaven ; thy God may arm,
If he is not abased, and with him arm
His flying warriors all,
From our infernal chains
And these sharp talons, now to draw thee forth ;
To his first loss, and first discomfiture,
A second like the first shall soon be join'd.
Of his supernal loss has he not heal'd
The painful memory,
The ruin of his Angels ?
That now, inflamed with anger,
He seeks in heaven another mightier ruin ?
To arms ! at length to arms,
Satanic warriors all !
And let his wretched residue of Angels,
All falling out of heaven,
Be all ingulfed in hell !
Lo meteors in the air and storms at sea
I kindle and I raise :
Lo Tartarus his wings
Spreads for celestial seats :
Behold the stars of God
By Lucifer's proud foot crush'd and extinguish'd ;
And girt for war and glory,
Let Tartarus through heaven proclaim a triumph !

SCENE THE EIGHTH.

ARCHANGEL MICHAEL, CHORUS OF ANGELS, CHORUS OF DEMONS.

MICHAEL. Tremble, thou son of wrath,
At this sharp dart's inevitable glance,
At the dread stroke of the celestial leader ;

Not against God, against thyself alone,
Thou raisest wrath, and wounding wound'st thyself.
Sink into shade, misguided, wretched spirit!
Utterly void of all angelic light,
Be blind in gazing on that heavenly lustre
To me imparted by the Lord of light,
The dazzler of the sun.
Fly, ye infected crew,
Ye enemies of God,
Nor let the breathing whirlwind,
With blast from hell, the yet unruin'd life
Of man o'erwhelm with deeper shades of darkness.
No more thy fatal hiss, thou snake of hell,
Shall by its discord stun;
Since pierced and panting now
Thou faintest, poison'd by thy own contagion.

LUCIFER. Heaven's talking minister,
With rays more loaded than inspired with courage;
Soft creature of the sky,
Thou angel of repose,
In solemn indolence,
Humility's calm nest, a seat of peace,
A warrior but in name,
Whose countenance is fear, whose heart confusion;
Spread, spread thy pinions for the arms of God,
Take refuge there, and there be confident!
For too unequal would the combat be
'Twixt cowardice and valour,
The warrior and the slave,
Infirmity and strength, and, let me say,
Betwixt vile Michael and brave Lucifer.
But if such daring can inflame thy heart,
As now to rescue from this warlike arm
That man, mere flesh and clay,
That animated dust, I warn thee well
Of mortal conflict sharp, where thou shalt see,
By this avenging hand
All the large family of God extinguish'd.

MICHAEL. Such mournful victory,
O Belial, in thy frenzy desperate,
As once in heaven thou gain'st, now with mankind

Subduing the deceived,
And hence the conquer'd conquers,
Freed is the captive, and thyself ensnared.
Now be it manifest
What palms of victory 'tis thine to raise.
Behold against thee, thou unfaithful spirit,
Michael become compassionately cruel.

LUCIFER. If at the early sound of war, the first
Encounter of our arms,
'Twas given a mighty warrior to destroy
A third part of the stars,
See in what brief assault
I can demolish the great seat of God!
Be dazzled now before this warlike blaze,
That from the brow of death I now diffuse,
Whirling in bloody circle
From my high front these death-denouncing comets!
Behold, behold at length
Heaven yields no more a refuge to its angels!
Since to a fate more joyous
A happy pass expands, and seems to say
Begone, at length begone,
Ye frighten'd angels, now relinquish heaven!
The warrior doom'd to hell
Becomes the blessed lord of these bright seats.

MICHAEL. Why longer pause to crush the proud loquacity
Of this presumptuous and insulting rebel?
Soon with a pen of adamant, with striking
Dread characters of blood,
Within the volume of eternal woe
The glory shall be blazon'd
Of thy lost victory.
To arms! at length to arms,
To spread dismay through hell!
Joy, Man! smile, Heaven; and Tartarus, lament!

LUCIFER. Seldom upon the vaunting
Of a proud tongue too bold
Boldness of hand attends. To arms! to arms!
Thou fight with me; and you, my followers, all
Unconquerable warriors,
Transperse and put to flight this abject crew,

The timid partisans
Of an unwarlike leader!
Ah! him who favours brief and endless shame
Possess'd in heaven, and now on earth display'd
Great fortitude but with unequal force,
Him a celestial stroke
Now drives confounded to the blind abyss;
And justice here decrees,
That he who lost the fight should lose the sun.
Angels and God, at length ye are triumphant!
Now, now is Lucifer
O'erwhelm'd, and all his legion
Sinks from the light of day to endless night.

MICHAEL. Fall thou at length, fall wounded and subdued,
Fierce monster of the shades,
To death's deep horrors, there be doom'd to die
By an immortal death!
Nor hope thy wings to heaven
Ever to spread again, that wish, too bold
For thee, so desperate and unrepenting.
Thou'rt fallen, at length thou'rt fallen,
Most arrogant of monsters,
In pain thou sink'st as low,
As high in joy it was thy hope to soar.
Again thou learn'st to fall,
Transfixt with thunder, to the drear abyss.
Fool! thou hast wish'd to take this man thy captive,
And thou alone hast plunged
Within the deepest gulf:
Hence, pierced and overwhelm'd,
Sinking to Tartarus
The flame of wrath eternal
Bore thee to hell, the hell of hottest fires.
A spotless angel, O thou prince of falsehood,
Thy folly hoped to put to flight and wound;
But thou, opposed to him
Hast yielded, plying thy winged feet in haste.
Thou too hast hoped to turn the spacious world,
In hostile flame, to ashes,
And at thy ardent blast and baleful breathing
Clouds, lightning, and tempestuous bursts of thunder,

With rattling deadly bolts of arrowy flame,
Roll'd through the air, whence all the mountains shook,
And all the vales re-echoed in convulsion.
And yet, behold, in heaven
The spheres move round more musical than ever,
And all the azure sky
The lucid sun with brighter beam adorns;
Behold the ocean, tremulously placid,
And from his Persian gulf
In gay abundance scattering pearl and coral;
Nor weary are the sportive fish in gliding
Along the trembling sapphire.
Behold, what verdant and what flowery brows
These pleasant vales in exultation raise;
Hark, to the grateful accents
Of every flying songster,
Inhabitant of air,
That in his flight now gives
Voice to the woods and music to the vales.
Now, all rejoicing in a day so noble,
To the confusion and the shame of hell,
Let every spotless ensign rise to heaven,
And fluttering sport with the exulting winds;
Let all the instruments of heavenly glory
Sound through the sky the victories of heaven!

SCENE THE NINTH.

ADAM, EVE, CHORUS OF ANGELS.

O SOUNDS beloved, that call us now in joy,
To scenes we left in sorrow; ah! I fear
To taint the fragrance of the heavenly host,
Stain'd as I am with sin.
O thou, that haply of celestial ruby
Wearest the blazing mail,
Hallow'd and brave Archangel,
Brave, yet compassionate, thy golden locks
Radiant as light, thy glittering helmet covers;
Thou in thy right hand shakest the spear of victory,
And raisest in thy left a golden balance:
Close, close thy painted plumes so rich in gold,

And cast a gentle look
On him who, prostrate, honours and adores thee.
EVE. O happy dawn of the eternal sun,
Thou courteous kind restorer,
To these my blinded eyes
With sorrow darken'd, and bedew'd with tears;
Now of thy rays, a fixt contemplator,
The mole of error stands;
Now on your voice depends
An asp, once deaf to heaven's most friendly dictates.
I, wavering wanderer,
Who undissembling own
The fault in which I fell, to thee I bend,
Nor in my speech deny
That I am Eve, the cause
Of human-kind's perdition.
Now let thy guardian hand
(O in the deeds of God thou faithful servant!)
Relieve me from the depth
Of my so great offences.
ADAM. Of heavenly mysteries
And secret will of God,
Thou hallow'd blest revealer,
Angel of eloquence!
The fatal presages
Of mournful Eve and Adam
Now quiet with the breath
Of thy exalted converse;
So that this troubled flood
That strikes the heart, in issuing from the eyes,
No more may make me seem
A rock of sorrow in a sea of tears.
MICHAEL. Arise, O both arise, you who of God
Are creatures so regarded,
Dismiss your fears of the infernal portent.
If your eternal Lord
Corrects you with one hand,
He with the other proffers your protection.
With happy auspices,
He who delivers souls,
On his light wings directs his flight to you,

In God's dread warfare harbinger of peace.
The mighty Fount of life,
The Artificer of souls,
The Architect of worlds,
The mighty Lord of heaven,
Maker of angels and of all things made,
The infinite Creator,
To safety summons you,
And to short war a lasting peace ordains.
Now from those double fountains
The warm and gushing streams
Of sorrow, Eve, restrain!
Thou hast been culpable
In rashly seizing the forbidden fruit;
To man thou hast occasion'd
Anguish and grief; thou hast indeed converted
Peace into war, and life into perdition:
Now by the aid of Him,
Whose handmaid nature is, and servant fate,
Who can restrain the sun,
And motion give to this unmoving mass,
Even yet may Eve enjoy
In prison, liberty;
May be unbound, though fetter'd,
And triumph, while she is o'ercome, and vanquish.
Now, since there shines in heaven
The star of love and peace,
And to the shame of hell,
The victor to the vanquish'd yields his palm,
Ah now let each, with humble eyes to heaven,
Incline the knee to earth,
And supplicant in prayer, give God the praise
Of goodness infinite;
For you shall find, to recompense your zeal,
That God your father is, your mansion heaven.

ADAM. Thou mighty Lord, who resting high above,
With regulated errors
And with discordant union guidest heaven;
O of the fair eternal realms of light
Thou Lord immutable, resplendent power,
Thou dazzler and obscurer of the sun!

Now in these weeping eyes
And on this humid cheek
I dry my bitter tears, I cheer my heart.
Now, by thy zealous mercy,
Though spotted, I have safety;
Security in hazard, love in hate,
And sinking into hell,
Am yet a citizen of highest heaven.

EVE. With dissolution life,
With strife and contest peace,
With ruin victory,
With deep offence salvation,
With powers of darkness heaven,
These to unite is not a human talent,
But of the eternal hand,
Omnipotence supreme; hence is it, Lord,
That wounded Eve is whole,
Triumphs in loss, and, though subdued, has glory.
My guide, I will obey thee;
Since, O benignant Lord,
Thy service is dominion,
And to obey thee, glory.
If pain allow not that I speak the pain
Which wounds my heart so deeply,
Thou most indulgent Father
Givest to the heart and soul a new existence:
Awaken'd by affliction,
Raising my voice to heaven,
I'll teach resounding echo
To carry to the sky my humble song,
Devoted to thy praise.

MICHAEL. Ye victims cleansed by tears,
Ye martyrs in affliction,
Amidst your blessed pains,
Ye holocausts of life and of content!
Now call the stars no more
Vindictive; war is now
Converted into peace,
And death turn'd into life.
Hence mortal Adam is now made immortal,
And Eve, though dead in many parts, revives.

The potent fire of love,
In which the tender God of mercy blazes,
Inflames him with pure zeal to save the sinner.
Contend, resist, and bravely
Wage with the hostile Serpent constant war;
It is man's province now
To conquer Hell, and triumph over Death.
Creatures of grace! feel deeply now for ever,
That your most gracious Father
Would not direct towards the ground your face,
As he has made the brute, but up to heaven;
So that, for ever mindful of their source,
Your happy souls may point towards their home:
For the high realm of heaven
Is as a shining glass, in which of God
The glories ever blaze.
Inure yourselves to water, sun, and winds,
And in the stony caves,
In the most barren desert
That the sun visits when he blazes most,
There both exert your powers;
There many years and many,
United ye shall dwell in hallow'd love;
And from your progeny henceforth the world
Exulting shall derive fertility.
And now to you, ye mortal pair, I promise,
As ye together sinn'd,
If ye in penitence have join'd together,
Together e'en in Heaven,
In a corporeal veil
Contemplating the sacred face of God,
Ye shall enjoy the bliss of Paradise.

ADAM. Greater than my offence I now acknowledge
Your mercy, O my God!
Since you, become the sovereign friend of man,
To him, though ruin'd, now extend your hand!

EVE. As I have known to sin,
So shall I know to weep;
For who in sinning knew forbidden joy,
Humble in punishment, should know to suffer.
Be mute, be mute, my tongue,

Speak thou within, my heart,
And say with words of love,
See how to mortals, even in perdition,
The hand of heavenly succour was extended!

MICHAEL. At length, since now with joy
Man, being thus deliver'd
From hell's keen talon, feels unbounded transport,
And in his rapture deems
Earth turn'd to heaven, this world a paradise;
By these pure splendid dazzling rays of heaven,
By these delightful fires,
That in the light of God more lovely blaze,
Rich with new beams, and with new suns this day,
Day of festivity,
The day of paradise, rather a day
Blest in itself, and blessing every other!
Let all with festive joy
Of God's indulgence sing;
Of Adam and of Eve,
Now made on earth the denizens of heaven;
And let your tuneful songs
Become the wonder of futurity.

ANGELS SING.

Move, let us move our feet
There, where this man shall now
Wash out his past offence
With humble, hallow'd drops;
And of the mighty Maker
Praise we the love and mercy,
That in this day to man's envenom'd wound
Suddenly gives his pity's healing aid;
Rejects him and receives,
Deeming his every wrong and error light;
And now at last with more benignant zeal,
And in despite of Satan,
Gives him, redeem'd from Hell,
A seat amid the golden stars of Heaven.
Ye progeny of Adam,
Whose race we shall behold adorn the world,
Ye shall not pray in vain

To your high Lord, the fountain of all mercy.
Be leaves of that pure branch,
On which the Word Incarnate shall be grafted !
Thunder, infuriate Hell,
Be stormy ! yet his leaf shall never fall :
To him a joyous offspring
Is promised by the Lord of heaven's great vineyard,
Stricken, transfixt, enkindled in a blaze,
And burning with eternal love for man.

END OF VOL VI.

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